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# THE SIXPENNY MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1866.

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## HOW I ROSE IN THE WORLD.

## CHAPTER VII.

## I GET ON.

IT is now the Spring of 1838, and poor Stephen is suffering from gout. The winter had been a severe one, and the snow still upon the ground, and I trudge through it to Mr. O'Leary's bedside, and, as the night advances, from Mr. O'Leary's bedside to Cannon-street, City. He can no longer indulge in his favourite business, and the whiskey remains in the decanter, untouched and untasted.

"This is horrible, my boy," said he to me, one night (it was the twenty-eighth of March, I remember well), "lying here, racked with pain in every joint, fearing the night, yet dreading the morning. It cannot last much longer—I am fairly worn out."

"Do not talk like that, my own dear, brave uncle," I urged; "you will get better as the season advances; only wait till we have the bright, warm sun-light back again, and then you will smile once more."

"I don't think so, George. In the summer I shall have it nearer the stomach, and then good bye to life. How do you get on at the Roberts's?"

Stephen's rapid transition from one subject to another by no means surprised me, so I replied, "Oh, very well indeed, uncle—I feel quite happy."

"I am glad of it," returned the invalid, "very glad. I knew you would uphold the honour of the family, wherever you went. I have never been disappointed in you—I am satisfied I never shall."

I felt flattered by this, and told him so. He smiled feebly, and continued—"If I *should* recover, George, which I very much doubt, I shall become a better and a wiser man. No more concerts, theatres, and billiard-rooms, late hours and hot suppers.—No, no, everything quiet, and orderly, and sober, and steady. Take my word for it, lad, that's it."

VOL. XIII.

I knew O'Leary. When ill, no man *meant* better than himself. "Have you heard anything of Mr. Marston lately?" I asked, after a pause.

"No, and I fancy that he has long since passed the 'bourne.' He was a strange fellow, I believe, and all the more likely to come to an untimely end."

"I think he is alive, sir," said I, seriously."

"Indeed! Why do you think that," he asked in some surprise.

"I can hardly tell you, but there is a conviction on my mind, amounting almost to a certainty that we shall meet again, and under better and happier circumstances. Strange that I feel, and am persuaded, that he will one day save me from a terrible fate."

"Well, well," returned O'Leary, "it may be as you say, and that he *is* alive and well. I'm sure I don't want to kill the poor devil. But, dropping him, what a lovely girl Miss Roberts is; how amiable, how graceful, how—in short, George, I should like you to marry her."

"*Me*, uncle! I fear you are dreaming."

"Not at all. I have been thinking of it for a long time, and it does not occur to me at present that you can do better; so the sooner you propose——"

"I have no desire," said I, laughing, "to curvet like a dog in a blanket, and therefore must not think of such a thing. Miss Roberts will marry a rich man some day, and from my heart I pray he may be a good one, and so we will leave the subject."

"On the contrary, my boy, let us stick to it. I tell you, again, I believe the girl loves you. Your aunt says she blushes when your name is mentioned, and that, by all accounts, is a good sign; what you want most is courage, and courage is an essential that, I am proud to say, O'Leary was never deficient in. And yet my uncle, Mark O'Leary,

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whole left an arm and a leg at Badajoz, used to say that he'd rather, any day in the year, face a whole park of artillery, or a *cheveaux de frise* of good English bayonets, than propose for any woman whose affection he was not already sure of."

"And yet you would have me propose for Eveleen! Come, uncle, are you not a little inconsistent?"

"By no means, George; remember, I do not commend my worthy relative for his moral cowardice (for such it is, neither more nor less) on this particular point. Far from it. Still, I do not advise you to act rashly—far from that either, but rather to endeavour quietly to ascertain the young lady's sentiments, which I have no doubt you will find to be altogether in your favour."

I could not help smiling at O'Leary and his ideas. In common with the major's widow, he entertained the conviction that, for a youth of seventeen, I was perfectly irresistible in every possible sense of the word.

But though I laughed at his words, they, nevertheless, sank deep into my heart, and there they remained for I know not how long. In the still of my own chamber I looked into that heart, and there enshrined I saw, for the first time, the image of Eveleen, the beautiful and good. Often have I recalled that night in after years, in moments of doubt and despair—in the dark hour of shame, and sorrow, and anguish, and, to all appearance, death; and the thought of it has brought the balm of consolation to my wounded soul. God bless you, Eveleen Roberts, rich in every virtue, with your true woman's heart, and gentle, loving nature. God bless you for the good you have done—God bless you for the good you have yet to do.

If I do not in these pages allude more frequently to my stepfather, it is because the act is always attended with a certain amount of pain; and my mind recurs again and again to this man, so singularly gifted by nature, recklessly casting beneath his feet talents of

no mean order, and giving himself up, deliberately and determinedly, to a course of life that few could contemplate without a shudder. I took every precaution to avoid encountering him (for I felt certain that he was alive and in London,) and as I was rarely in the street during daylight, our chances of meeting were but small. We did meet, once, however, when, after a nod of recognition, he darted down a dirty lane away, as if to prevent all attempts at conversation. I did not think he actually hated me—I am now sure he did not; but I am satisfied that my presence was always a reproach to him, and that it was the means of sending him back to the past with all its dreary associations. I rather think that he feared more than disliked me, and dreaded my carrying out, one day, the threat which I uttered in that lonely street, under that wintry sky. But I had learned to school my heart, and take to it better, purer, holier thoughts. I forgave him all his cruelty to my mother (never premeditated, as I believed,) and his injustice to myself—fully, frankly, and entirely forgave him. I told him so in after years, when my own heart was crushed within me, and the light of life seemed to have departed for ever.

Reckless, desperate, abandoned as he was, I hoped, almost against hope, that he was not wholly lost, but, that, like the sheep who has long fed upon barren pastures, he might one day return to the fold.

I was at Mr. Roberts's about two years, when the following short scene was one day enacted by that gentleman and myself.

"George Allen, forward!" cried a lad of thirteen, newly entered, but whose name I now forget; "the gov'nor wants you," he added, in answer to my look of inquiry.

And forward went George Allen, not knowing what was about to happen.

"George," said Mr. Roberts, in a very quiet, business-like tone, when I stood before him; "George, shut that door, and listen to me."



I did the one, and prepared to do the other.

"You have now been with me two years, and your conduct during that period has been such as to give entire satisfaction to those best capable of judging of it. Mr. Snaggs (poor old Snaggs, after all) and Mr. Loader say so, and I am bound to believe them. It is a pleasing thing to see a young man devoting himself so entirely to his employer's interests, and, sooner or later, the reward will come. You are not a person of great talents, but you possess uncommon industry, and this I infinitely prefer. Every day you become more and more useful, and it is my duty to recognise that fact in some substantial way. Acting upon that sense of duty, therefore, I have given orders that your salary be raised twenty pounds a year from this date, and trust that the increase, trifling though it be, will prove that I am not altogether insensible to your merits."

I bowed my thanks, and he continued—

"I am sorry to learn from my daughter that you lost your sister some time ago; had I heard it sooner, I should sooner have expressed my sympathy. It is painful to lose a relative or friend, but such losses are sent very often for our good. Afflictions of this kind usually purify the heart, and elevate it more completely from earth to heaven. May it be so in your case! Now leave me, and send here Mr. Snaggs.

That very evening Mr. O'Leary informed Eveleen of my good fortune. She was delighted, and said she "was sure that papa would still further encourage Mr. Allen," (she had ceased to call me George) and this made me happier than everything else put together.

I have often since thought it strange how short was my sleep that night, and how with that sleep came loved forms bending over my pillow, and soft voices murmuring in my ear; and how Eveleen herself, clad in a white robe, but with her face veiled, and

a moss-rose in her hair, knelt beside me, and, taking my hand in hers, vowed, in the presence of Mr. O'Leary and my aunt, to be mine forever. And when I awoke, all was gone, and I saw nothing but Jackson sitting upon a stool by the bed (it was midnight and a candle was burning), with his inexpressive face and dull green eyes, turned wondering upon mine.

I asked him, with a shudder at the cold reality that now presented itself, what was the matter, and why he was up and dressed at such an hour.

He told me that he had been in an agony with a toothache or a toe ache (I now forget which) and that, being unable to get any rest, he had risen and dressed himself, determined to wait, with as much patience as he could command, the coming day.

Did I mutter anything in my sleep, I asked with some apprehension.

"Oh, dear, no," he replied, "or if you did I was too much engaged with my own thoughts, to think about it."

"You're sure?"

"Sure! why of course I'm sure; why shouldn't I?"

"I'm glad of it?"

"I know you are, and its honest of you to say so. I wish there were a few more honest fellows in the world, and 'twould get on a great deal better. Do you know I'm beginning already to tire of life, and to think seriously of quitting it, and I wouldn't mind doing it this blessed night, if I thought there was rest for me somewhere.

What do you mean?" I asked in some alarm. "Just what I say. If I were certain that there was no God, nor devil, nor heaven, nor hell, I'd make a vacancy in Roberts's for some shoeless, hungry hog by to-morrow morning."

"Tired of the world, Jackson! and at eighteen!" I exclaimed in amazement, as I glanced at his white face, rendered still more white and ghastly by the fitful flickering of the candle.

"Yes, quite tired of it," he re-

plied, in a wearied, dejected tone ; for I hate everything and everyone in it."

"It is lately that you have come to think and talk so. My poor fellow, you must be ill."

"Why, yes," said he after a few moments pause. "Why, yes, so I think I am, and if I had a little medicine, I'm sure 'twould do me good, 'twould ease me here." And he pressed his hand tightly on his heart.

"Shall I get up and go for a doctor, Simon? Dr. Morse lives on Ludgate Hill, you know."

"And he could help that same hill just as much as he could help me: so you see there would be no use in sending for him. No, George; when the time comes I must be my own physician."

I felt a little uneasy, for his manner was wild, and I had serious thoughts of summoning assistance; but he seemed to read me at a glance, for he deliberately stood up (for hitherto he had been sitting doubled up upon the stool until his chest rested upon his arms), walked to the door, locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

"There, now," he said, with a low laugh, "there'll be no doctor to-night, unless he comes through the keyhole, and that's not very likely, I should think. Don't look frightened, man; I don't mean to harm you—by the living —, I don't."

Never had I heard Jackson swear before. No wonder, then, that I was appalled at the oath, and the frightful vehemence with which it was uttered.

"I don't fear you, Jackson," I replied, "but I fear *for* you."

"And why should you fear for me?" he asked, abruptly.

"You have yourself supplied the answer to that question—you swear! What have you not, then, to fear?"

"Oh, aye!—fire and brimstone, and the bottomless pit, and all that sort of thing. Well, I believe you're right, and I daresay that I shall have *my* portion, as well as many others, 'in the lake that burneth.'"

"The subject is an awful one, Simon, so, in God's name, don't trifle with it."

"I won't, then, since you wish it, and I'm sorry for what I said just now. But, George, I've lain awake this whole week, night after night, thinking and thinking and thinking, until my brain has well-nigh turned, and my heart has well-nigh burst, so that you must not be surprised if I sometimes say and do odd things."

"But what is the cause of all this?"

"Will you laugh at me if I tell you?"

"Laugh at you! No."

"Well, then, I will be frank and honest, just as you were a while ago. I was born, you know, at the same time as Eveleen Roberts, and it is but natural that I should feel a deep interest in everything that concerns her. God knows I *do* feel an interest in her—an interest *too deep*, too strong, too abiding for my own peace of mind; but that is not what I was going to say. To come, then, to the point at once. Eveleen looks ill—pale, thin, and exhausted, has lost her appetite, I understand, and with it her spirits—coughs in the mornings, and sweats at night; is feverish, restless, nervous, fond of solitude, silence, and tears, makes a confidant of no one, but suffers to herself. All this I learnt from her own maid, for by this time you must know that I am a privileged person in the family—a sort of fool or simpleton, such as the Irish gentleman loves to attach to his household. Well, this grieves me, *how much* you shall never know; but that is not all. I fear that her affections are being tampered with, and that she will be forced some day, and that day not far distant either, to give her hand to one she respects, but cannot love. Sooner than that should happen, I tell you, George, that I would rather see her lying beside her mother, with the full assurance and conviction that she slept the sleep of the just."

I stared in mute astonishment at Jackson, and he went on:—



"Mr. Roberts is a good man, but he knows nothing of the human heart. He means well by his daughter, yet he will sacrifice her happiness, or I mistake him greatly, to the blind devotion to an idea. All this is dreadful to me to see and feel and know, and at times I think I shall go mad—that is if I be not, as many have often hinted, mad already. Madness is common in our family, and it is quite possible that I have got more than my share of it. However, I have wisdom enough to see some things that people around me seem blind to.

He stared me steadily in the face as he spoke these last words; then, extinguishing the candle, undressed himself without another word, and slipped quietly into bed.

For the remainder of that night and morning, no sleep visited my eyelids. I lay awake, pondering upon Jackson's mysterious conduct, and his equally mysterious words, and more than once I caught myself exclaiming almost aloud—"There is danger to Eveleen's life, there is danger to Eveleen's happiness. Would to God that Mr. Roberts would send her abroad!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### I AM IN DESPAIR!

MR. Roberts did *not* send Eveleen abroad, but he took a small neat house for her and Mrs. Roberts in the immediate neighbourhood of Richmond, and thither he himself repaired three evenings in each week. I was now miserable. I could no longer hear her sweet voice, or see her sweet face, and I felt as if the sun were suddenly withdrawn from the firmament, and I left in utter darkness. How gloomy, sullen, and morose did I now become to all around me! How little did I heed the reproofs of Mr. Snaggs, who seemed to think that latterly I had taken unwarrantable liberties with the facts and figures of his day-book and ledger! How snappishly did I reply to poor Mr. Snader, when that gentleman desired to know the cause of my unhappiness! and how determinedly

did I quarrel with Messrs. Close, Rice, Horne, and some dozen other youths, of my own size, age, and condition! I am afraid that once or twice I thrashed, rather unmercifully, a boy named Forrest, who I fancied grinned at me, but who did nothing of the kind, and I remember my deep shame on seeing him next morning with a blackened eye and a lacerated cheek. But that boy had the soul of a Christian and a gentleman centred in his little body, and on that morning he forgave me without an effort. This same little Forrest became afterwards an attached friend, and he now sits by me as I write. He is still a bachelor, rich, and tolerably handsome, and it is for the benefit of the fair sex, and at his own earnest request, that I make this announcement. His address can be had from our mutual friend, the publisher of this magazine, to whom I have in confidence confided it.

Sadly and solitarily did I now wander about the streets each evening, looking out for the Richmond 'bus (they called it omnibus then, and it *didn't* start from St. Paul's), and feeling a sort of insane pleasure in looking at its driver and conductor. I conceive that at that time I was in a state bordering on distraction, and that the horses of the 'bus, from the serious way in which they wagged their heads, were quite aware of it. At O'Leary's I was little better than a lunatic, and contrived to talk the greatest possible amount of nonsense in one hour and twenty-five minutes—the length of time to which my visits were strictly limited. On such occasions Stephen and my aunt usually smiled good-naturedly at the silliness of my remarks, and, like the Richmond horses, gravely shook their heads. Whether they suspected that as a despairing lover I was entitled to a little forbearance at their hands I know not, but certainly they acted as if they did, and this made me more miserable than ever. What I suffered no mortal can tell—silently, secretly, I had almost said unrepiningly suffered. Unrepiningly!

oh no; for many a time has my heart risen in rebellion against God, and in the bitterness of my soul I have asked, "Why hast Thou made me?" but the next morning I have fallen upon my knees, crying out, "Lord, lay not this sin to my charge."

I complained of illness, after a time, and got a separate sleeping apartment; oh, what a luxury! I could now give way to my own feelings with the conviction that the prying eye of Jackson was no longer upon me—I could think of Eveleen, pray for Eveleen, without the slightest interruption or restraint, and this was a privilege I prized above all others.

One night, I was sitting in this room, and preparing for bed, when, greatly to my surprise, I heard a gentle knock at the door. I opened it, and Stephen Dorricks entered. He had been dining with Mr. Loader, and some other friends, that evening, and purposed sleeping at Cannon Street, in preference to seeking his lodgings in the Old Kent Road.

"Am I intruding?" he asked, mildly, as he stood slightly in the doorway, with his handsome, pale face turned inquiringly towards me.

"By no means, Mr. Dorricks. Pray come in."

"I really do not know that I am justified in doing so: the hour is late, and you will not thank me for accepting your invitation, though I own I feel strongly tempted to do so," he said. "Midnight lamps (and yours shone out brightly enough as I came down the stairs) carry me back to my school-boy days, and almost make me feel young again. Come, I will be frank with you. I should like to sit here half-an-hour, and hear from you something of your early history. Believe me, Mr. Allen, I feel a deep interest in your welfare, and would greatly rejoice at your success; and that very interest led me irresistibly to your door five minutes ago. Am I forgiven?"

He held out his hand and I took it; and, after a few words of thanks on my part, we sat down.

We conversed for some time on indifferent subjects; and even on indifferent subjects, I own I felt charmed with him. I had heard of, and even partially experienced, the "fascination of conversation," as it is termed, and the marvellous power it confers upon its possessor, but never before to such a wondrous degree. It was not the language of Dorricks that arrested and chained you. No! that was simple, natural, and free from pedantry, or exaggeration of any kind. It was not the subject, for it was usually such a one as most men choose, and which we every day see handled, skilfully or otherwise, in discussion. It could hardly have been the manner; that was earnest and convincing—oh, how convincing!—it is true, but calm, quiet, and almost unimpassioned. It was not the amount of reading, or laboriously acquired knowledge, brought to bear upon that subject; for Dorricks appealed rather to reason than to authorities, whether living or dead, seldom had recourse to quotations, and never made a parade of book-learning. What was it, then, that made this man so irresistible in conversation—so mighty in argument—so convincing in discussion? In what consisted his power? I cannot tell! Everywhere his influence was felt—nowhere was it explained. Whether he could explain himself, I am unable to say—perhaps he could not. But this much I do know, that he at all times used—I will not say wielded, for that scarcely explains my meaning, or does him justice—that tremendous power with prudence, skill, and moderation.

In a hurried sketch, such as these pages can only lay claim to, it will not be expected that Dorricks's character should be as fully elucidated as in a work of more showy pretensions it would be—and I am constantly reminded that my story must be confined within very narrow limits. I can only give, therefore, the concluding portion of his remarks on the evening in question.



It wanted twenty minutes to eleven when he rose to leave, and, as I thought, reluctantly.

"You will sometimes come and see me, I trust, Mr. Dorricks," I said, looking intently at him; "I have now this little room all to myself, and I feel glad of it, for I will not conceal from you that Jackson is not exactly the sort of companion I could have desired."

"Why no, I should think not," he returned, quietly. "Do you know, Mr. Allen, that I have tried to understand that young man, and failed? He is a perfect puzzle to me. He speaks well, and has read more, I verily believe, than half the scholars of Oxford or Cambridge, and yet there is a mixture of ignorance and simplicity about him that is quite inexplicable. Looking at him superficially, he does not appear to have any well-defined notions of right and wrong, but once probe beneath the surface, and you will find a depth, and power, and originality of thought, that is positively startling. Kind-hearted and generous, I believe him to be, but weak and credulous to a painful extent upon some particular points. Wise, yet simple; learned, yet ignorant; enlightened, yet superstitious—a living moral paradox—explain him if you can."

"I can answer for his kind-heartedness and generosity," I replied, "for I have experienced both."

"He is as impressionable as wax, and, in the hands of the skilful workman, he might be moulded to any form. Were I an ambitious man—which, I am thankful to say, I am not—and that the life of another stood in my way, I could, in five minutes, convert this same Simon Jackson into a murderer."

"He sometimes reminds me, Mr. Dorricks, of Doubtful, in the 'Pilgrim's Progress.'"

"Ah!" he exclaimed, stretching out a hand, whilst his eyes sparkled, almost with enthusiasm. "Ah! happy, glorious Bunyan, what glimpses do you not give us of the unseen! Look at the river Jordan; the sinking Christian, and the

trembling Hopeful; the men in shining garments—the golden gates—the paved streets—the tuned harps; and then ask yourself if this be not something more than a glimpse of that heaven wherein dwelleth righteousness?"

"Pardon me, Mr. Dorricks," said I, venturing upon a subject that I had long wished to refer to; "but I have often thought that, had you turned your attention to the Church, you would by this time have made a name for yourself."

Dorricks smiled.

"My dear young friend," he said, "what you call making a name is very often but laying the foundation of a young clergyman's destruction, and rendering his preaching powerless and ineffective. The praise of man! After all, what is it? Mere breath. To be sure, if he be popular, his church is well filled—the empty pews of the neighbouring ones proclaiming that fact but too plainly; his society is courted; his sermons are duly reported and commented on in the usual channels; his eye, his face, his voice, his very hair, are all described with the greatest accuracy; and each and every one of them is said to bespeak intellect of the highest order. Ladies gather round him as he leaves the pulpit, in the hope that the very shadow of his garment may rest upon them as he passes, and if one of them but succeed in inducing him to write his name in her prayer-book, or even mark a passage with his pencil, why, from that moment, she is a happy woman, and the admiration, if not envy, of her sex. A year or two rolls over, however, and that man is no longer heard of. A star of greater brilliancy and magnitude has shone out, and his light pales before it. For no fault that he can accuse himself of, he is consigned to the oblivion of forgetfulness; and, disgusted with the world, and all things in it, this once petted darling of capricious fortune seeks the unbroken quiet of some village churchyard.—But a word about yourself at parting. I have been talking with Mr. Loader this

evening about you, and he thinks, with me, that you will one day occupy a high post here. Believe me, that when that day comes we shall all rejoice. But, to speak plainly, I have lately witnessed a change in your whole demeanour, and so have others. You have become (pardon me if I am too plain) dull, and gloomy, and apparently unhappy. I do not ask the cause of all this, but, whatever it may be, I would say to you,—rise superior to it. Cast away all doubts, and forebodings, and groundless fears; employ aright the gifts which God has so manifestly bestowed, and the blessings which He would have you to enjoy; seek the society of good men, and follow such, even as they follow their Lord and Master. Leave doubts and fears for the mere worldling—they belong not to, and form no part of you. He has doubts—he has fears—he has forebodings; but the language of the Christian is, and ever has been, ‘I know, and am persuaded.’ Think on this, my young friend, and let me some day have the satisfaction of knowing that these few words have not been spoken in vain.”

“Would that I could reason thus!” I cried, fairly carried away by my feelings. “Oh, Stephen Dorricks, singularly gifted and blessed of God, look with a pitying eye upon my weakness; stretch out your strong hand, for I am weak and helpless; leave me not, for I fear to be left alone with my own heart; but pray for me—pray that I may be saved from myself, the world, and the devil; for oh, they war against me with a cruel warfare!”

And this man prayed for me—prayed that I might become a better and a wiser lad; and when he left me, I laid my head upon my pillow, to weep in the very bitterness of despair.

Oh, Stephen Dorricks, in the solitude of the chamber in which I now write, I pause to think of you. I look back upon the past, and my eyes become dim; for your strange,

eventful life, and early death, are still before me. I see you as you knelt that night, and I feel as if I were again beside you. Oh, let me write on! Hand and pen, do not tremble so, but write, write on. Write of hope and happiness, and of a gentle woman’s love; of children crowding your knee, and smiling in your face. Write of your domestic joys, and the joys of others; of your uncle and aunt, green as the sapling, yet tough as the sturdy oak—of your own name and fame, and the name and fame of one dearer than all three—of the one dark spot in the summer of your life—the night of sorrow, which so soon was succeeded by a morn of peace, and joy, and happiness unutterable. Write of all these, and much more, ere it be too late; for a soft hand will soon be laid upon your shoulder, and a soft voice will soon whisper in your ear,—“It is twelve o’clock, dear George, write no more.”

## CHAPTER IX.

### AN ACCIDENT AND SOME OF ITS RESULTS.

MR. ROBERTS’S confidence in me seemed to increase day by day, and in justice to myself I must say that I did everything in my power to deserve it. Whether, if that gentleman had not been father to Eveleen I would have laboured so anxiously to promote his interests is a question I should not now like to be called on to answer, but certainly I believe I would have done my duty under any and every conceivable circumstance. I tried to please him, and I succeeded, for I did everything with “a single eye.”

One clear, frosty night, when returning home from O’Leary’s, thinking of Eveleen, (I’m sure I never thought of anybody else,) and looking up at the stars as if I already fancied her among them, the cry of “Fire, fire,” came faintly on my ear, and with it the low, distant roll of wheels, and the indistinct murmur of mingling voices. With the speed of a buffalo I bounded forward in the direction



indicated by the sounds, but a small sized, currish-looking dog who was wending his way also towards the scene of noise and conflagration—inspired doubtless with the philanthropic idea of either working an engine, or assisting in pulling up the water plugs—getting at that critical moment between my legs, I was flung forward upon my face, where I lay kicking and sprawling for fully ten minutes before any assistance could be rendered me. Raised at length upon my legs, I felt that they would no longer support me, and I fell helplessly into somebody's arms. One said my neck was broken, a second my ribs, a third both thighs, a fourth (and he happened to be a surgeon) a simple ankle sprain. Groaning with pain, I was borne to that quiet home which I had left a few minutes before in perfect health and strength. Such is life.

They laid me tenderly upon a bed, and Stephen and Mrs. O'Leary hung over me in silent agony. A night of torture passed, and the morning found me in a high fever. How long I tossed about it would be now useless to consider. Days and weeks must have passed, but in my state of delirium I took no note of time. Still I knew and felt that everything that the two anxious watchers could do to ease me even a pang was being done, and that perfect recovery was only a matter of time.

One day, when rather better than usual, I lay with a small volume of Moore's "*Melodies*" before me, shading my eyes with my hand, for they were still very weak, and trying to read aloud the exquisite ballad entitled "*Love's Young Dream*." That song had long been a favourite with me, and I regarded it (though I now admit without any very just reason) as the most strikingly beautiful of all the poems of that wondrously gifted man. I got through the two first verses—deeply touching to most men, inexpressibly so to me—with tolerable calmness and composure, but when I came to

the third, and which begins with "Oh, that hallowed form is ne'er forgot," all that calmness forsook me, and I burst into tears.

Long, bitterly, passionately, did I weep. Oh! it is too true, I cried aloud—too, too true. Moore must have known what it was to love hopelessly and in secret when he said—"It lingering haunts the greenest spot in memory's waste." "Memory's waste!" Beautiful beyond expression! I now feel, I know I do, just as he did when he wrote those words. My heart, and thoughts, and memory—all have become a waste, and so will continue without the fructifying influences of Eveleen's presence. I long for her—I pine for her—I die for her—I languish for want of her smile—I—but stay, let me think of Dorricks's words—"Leave doubts and fears for the mere worldling." What did he mean by that? Could he have—oh, what a fool I have become! Mr. Dorricks spoke generally, and could not have intended any reference to this all-engrossing, all-absorbing passion—how could he? She knows nothing of it, he suspects nothing of it, and even if he did he would not, I am satisfied, ever betray me. Ah! were he here now I think I could open to him my whole heart and soul—tell him that there is a fierce passion consuming me with more deadly certainty than the fever that—

A slight noise, cutting short my further reflections, caused me to turn my head, and there, in the centre of the room, and not two yards off my bed, stood, in company with Mrs. O'Leary, her who was dearer to me than all the world, with her tender, truthful glance fixed wonderingly and pityingly upon me.

It was no dream or illusion, for I put out my hand and felt her, and saw that she was the Eveleen I had prayed for, still pale and thin, it is true, but with the light of health and hope beaming in her loving eyes.

"Eveleen—Miss Roberts—God be thanked, it is you!"

"Yes, and oh! I am sorry to see you thus. I only returned from Richmond to-day, and I determined that the first visit I paid should be to your bedside."

Oh! now did I see her as she was, the true, pure, high-souled girl, moistening my fevered brow and parched lip, speaking words of hope, and comfort, and confidence, and bringing light and joy to my gloomy chamber. If I loved her before, oh! how did I worship her now; how did I pray for and bless her, and how did my heart die within me at the thought that the day might come when the light should depart from before me, and I should see her no more for ever!

I grew better, and still she came, sometimes with Mrs. Roberts, who was unremitting in her attention; sometimes with Jane, or Mary Loader, but never again alone. Perhaps this was as it should be, and though I could well have wished it otherwise, I tried to say, "It is quite right and quite proper."

When I could sit up, my chair was wheeled downstairs to the parlour, and there everybody read to me in turn, Miss Roberts included.

Did I wish ever to get well again? I do not think I did. Restored health could but deprive me of Eveleen, and send me back to misery and Simon Jackson. Sad, sad reality, I did get better. I did get well. I tried to smile and look resigned, and hope, and trust, and pray, and feel confident and happy. I tried to do all these and failed.

In a day or two after my perfect recovery, I returned with a heavy heart to Mr. Roberts's. The office was now to me a rayless dungeon, and my stool the log to which I was to be perpetually chained. I believe I looked like a malefactor who knows he is undergoing the punishment due to his offences, and seeks to avoid the eyes of his fellow-men. I sneaked and skulked about wherever sneaking or skulking was possible; hid myself in out-of-the-way nooks and corners, hung

my head whenever any one passed, and started when any one spoke. Even when alone, I fancied that the inkstand eyed me most suspiciously, and that my quill-pen took such general liberties with me, and evinced such a thorough knowledge of the state of my feelings, that I verily believe if I encountered a goose in the street I should be in constant apprehension of a whole regiment of feathers starting from her back and wings, and dragging me to the nearest prison. I had been annoyed, too, to such a degree by the insolent bearing of my penknife, that the very sight of a cutler's shop, or even of a cutler himself, caused my hair to stand on end. I was constantly tormented with a desire to smash my hat, merely because it did not hang straight upon the hook, and this proceeding I looked upon as personal and affronting. My gloves, moreover, seemed particularly and unbecomingly obstinate, and often defied (and successfully) my efforts to put them on. In fact, a conspiracy seemed to exist between certain minor articles of my wardrobe and the inkstand and penknife seriously to annoy and incommode me on all possible occasions. This was a humiliating position enough, and I felt it in its intensity.

How I dreaded the sound of Mr. Roberts's foot, how I dreaded the sound of Mr. Roberts's voice, none but myself can tell. How I feared a disclosure and a scene; and that scene, I accustomed myself briefly to describe. An office clerk flying frantically from the presence of an indignant father, hoping, but vainly, to escape some tender impressions from his paternal boot; other clerks following the flying one, and giving chase, as if to a mad dog; shouts of laughter in his ears, and the hoarse voice of Jackson high above the rest. And the mud of the streets bespattering him, and the rain from the clouds drenching him, and the little boys jostling him, and the little dogs biting him, and the little cocks crowing at him; and everything



and everybody abusing, insulting, and ill-treating him.

On such things my thoughts ever ran, and such pictures my imagination ever drew. Over and over, I had come to the resolution of throwing myself at Mr. Roberts's feet, and confessing all. But when I looked at his steady eye, and his wispy hair, and his broad chest, and his burly figure, and his thick-soled boots, I found my courage desert me, and I slunk away, like a coward and a slave.

All this time I was becoming more and more conscious of the fact that Mr. Loader had grown cold towards me. Poor man, he had good cause! My waste-book and journal are only fit for the paper basket, and my ledger is as unintelligible as a ledger can well be; it is blotted, crossed and scratched in every folio, and made to tell lies in every column, and present balances to a fabulous amount, and do all manner of extravagant things, within the smallest possible space. I thoroughly succeeded in mystifying Mr. Snaggs, Mr. Rogers, and a half-dozen others, and they shake their heads significantly, and give it as their deliberate and unprejudiced opinion, that there is something wrong with me. I promise better things, when remonstrated with, and slip away at the earliest opportunity to weep. My heart has somehow grown old suddenly. There is a thick darkness about and around me, and I can see nothing but the wide gulf which separates me from Eveleen. There is light enough for that, but for nothing else.

I am sensible that I grow thinner, that my coat is too wide for me, and that my vest laps in an unpleasant manner; but that is not enough—I become positively ill, and, worse than all, a doctor attends me. How he doses me! Perhaps he likes it—perhaps he doesn't—who can tell? At any rate, I am soon on my legs again, and Jackson grins at me, though not as of yore. He is taller by four inches than I, yet he does not brag of it, and I could ride comfortably on his

shoulders without distressing him. Yet Jackson is a coward, and Jackson is not ashamed to avow it. Smyth, two years his junior, and nearly a foot shorter, pummels him unmercifully, and grimly I advance to the rescue. How I turn the tables, black his eyes, punch his head, and otherwise maltreat his person, let Smyth, the injured, tell. Victor like, I bear the crouching but highly grateful Jackson off, and he vows that he is mine for ever. I am far from believing him, though; for Simon Jackson, with all his good nature, no longer holds a place in my affections.

But time hurries me on, and under Mr. Roberts's roof I become almost a man. I look back, and see myself a little boy, seated upon the high stool, with Loader smiling at me, and telling me that he was once as small, and sat upon that very stool, and how he cut notches on its legs, and carved his name upon it, and inked it, and took innumerable liberties with it, for all of which he felt profoundly sorry, and seemed very much disposed to apologise; and then I think of the long years that rolled by me, bringing with them many blessings, for each and every one of which I try to feel thankful. God has been very good to me through so many years; He will be good to me to the end. Yes, as I sit in my chair this moment, with loving eyes bent upon me, and loving hands clasping my knees, and loving arms encircling me, I feel that there has not been one wish of my heart left ungratified.

Do I tire you, dear reader? If to, let me make amends by turning so Richard Graham.

## CHAPTER X.

BEING A DRAMATIC CHAPTER, AND  
A VERY SHORT ONE INTO THE  
BARGAIN.

RICHARD GRAHAM, Esq., A.B.,  
Ex. Sch. and Gold Medalist, and  
George Allen, an amiably weak  
young man, and nothing else in  
particular.

*Enter* RICHARD.

RICHARD. Good evening, George. Glorious weather! Shall we have a stroll?

GEORGE. As you please. Where?

RICHARD. Oh, anywhere.

*(Bus.—George puts on his hat, and the two heroes arrive at the place indicated by "anywhere.")*

RICHARD. How refreshing it is to get a sight of the green fields, and the budding trees! You don't often see them in the neighbourhood of Cannon Street, I fancy.

GEORGE. I know but little of the country, I'm ashamed to say, Mr. Graham.

RICHARD. I am sure of it. Pent up 'mid bricks and mortar, and smoke and fog, how long have you lived?

GEORGE. Nearly twenty years. A long time, is it not?

RICHARD. Aye, George, a long time, truly. But is it not your own fault?

GEORGE. My own fault? I hardly think so.

RICHARD. I do. Why, man, the world's wide, and wealth attainable. Young America stretches out her hands, and cries, "Come over and help us;" in other words, "Relieve us of our gold."

GEORGE. *(coldly.)* I thank you for your hint.

RICHARD. *(gaily.)* To be sure you do. Who would not? Take my word for it, America is the place for you.

GEORGE. And for you.

RICHARD. Oh dear no! I'll turn surgeon some day; and there are consumptions, and dropsies, and heart diseases enough here, to say nothing of broken heads, legs, and arms, which I look upon as addendas to the general list. No, lad, London is my El Dorado; New York should be yours.

GEORGE. I like London.

RICHARD. What then?

GEORGE. I shall remain.

RICHARD. Be it so. I hope you may not repent it.

GEORGE. I hope not.

RICHARD. *(Laying his hand on George's arm.)* My dear fellow,

you are unhappy. What has happened?

GEORGE. *(Shaking off Richard's hand, and speaking very gruffly.)* Nothing.

RICHARD. I fear something has. Everybody has seen the change, myself, of course, included.

GEORGE. You are mistaken. I never was more happy in my life; why should it be otherwise? I have youth, health, and strength, and the love of two beings who are everything to me.

RICHARD. No, not everything—goodness forbid. I could name a third, if I liked. *(Richard here introduces a little "bus." which consists in whistling rather dolefully, "I'd mourn the hopes that leave me," and half buried his heel in a clay bank, upon which he is sitting.)*

GEORGE. *(Trying to look offended.)* You doubt me, then?

RICHARD. *(Wiping his boot.)* My dear boy, I doubt no one; but if I were to tell you that my good uncle thinks you are changed, what would you say.

GEORGE. *(colouring)* Mr. Roberts?

RICHARD. Aye, Mr. Roberts.

GEORGE. Why, that he too is mistaken.

RICHARD. 'pon my life, I'm glad to hear it. Now I'll let you into a secret, my friend. Mr. Roberts meditates a trip to the Continent, very shortly.

GEORGE. *(carelessly.)* Indeed!

RICHARD. Yes, and, as he purposes being absent for some time, old Loader is to take the management of the concern, with the understanding that himself and his daughters occupy the house, to see that everything goes on right.

GEORGE. I'm glad of that.

RICHARD. Yes, I thought you'd be. You'll all be as happy and comfortable together as Darby and Joan. The daughters shall play for you of an evening, and the father shall pray for you afterwards. Ha! ha! ha!

GEORGE. I don't like jesting with religion, Mr. Graham.

RICHARD. Oh, I'm a wild fellow,



and mean no harm. You, or they, will make me all right by-and-bye, I dare say.

GEORGE. Is Mr. Roberts unwell, then?

RICHARD. Not he; he's as well as ever he was in his life, and that's saying a good deal. No, my highly imaginative young friend, he is not ill, but Miss Roberts is, and has been for many months, though latterly she seemed much improved; and so they're going to try what a warmer climate will do for her, if, indeed, she'll consent to leave London, which, I own, seems by no means probable.

GEORGE. And you recommended this, I suppose?

RICHARD. Recommended what?

GEORGE. Miss Roberts going abroad.

RICHARD. (*Laughing.*) Faith, not I! If I had my will, she'd remain where she is. She's too good to *parlez vous* with those cursed Frenchmen. Better stay at home, and marry some honest Englishman—yourself, for instance. (*More "bus," which consists in hitting George on the shoulder, and winking at him knowingly.*)

GEORGE. (*confusedly.*) Or you, or Mr. Dorricks.

RICHARD. Oh, confound Dorricks—he's not worth mentioning! But, seriously speaking, the poor girl's health is really alarming; and Roberts, who loves her better than he loves his life, is so befooled and blinded, that he cannot, or will not, see the cause. Now, I'm not very skilful in such matters, but still, I don't think I hit very wide of the mark when I say that she has lost her heart to some one, though who that some one is it would puzzle me sadly to guess. It may be you, for all I know.

GEORGE. (*Highly indignant.*) Mr. Graham, why do you speak so to me?

RICHARD. Pooh, nonsense!—its only my way—mere manner—nothing under the surface, like this Dorricks—will drop it some day—sooner the better perhaps. By Jove, there's little Rivers, the attorney!

GEORGE. What, that withered little man, limping into the cigar-shop?

RICHARD. The same. He never smokes, but goes in there every evening, to beg a pinch of snuff, and pick up the scandal of the day. That fellow will never die, or, should he chance to do so, Phoenix-like, a live Rivers will rise out of the ashes of the dead one.

GEORGE. Is he rich?

RICHARD. Oh frightfully! a millionaire, they say. Shocking old sinner. Wouldn't give a sixpence to save St. Paul's from conflagration, and has sent more men to the devil in a hurry than half the Jews and money lenders put together. He goes to church on Sundays, weeps pious tears at the sermons, and tries to cheat the parson who preaches there, on Monday, if he chance to meet him.

GEORGE. Is he married?

RICHARD. He was—has one daughter, loveliness itself, I'm told, but living in some confounded prison of a place near Clapham, with walls as high as the monument, and as thick as a Dutchman's skull. Gad, George, there's a chance for you! Romeo on love's something or another, waiting to carry off Juliet in the garden. But tell me, what are your prospects at my uncle's?

GEORGE. Judging by the past, I should say fair.

RICHARD. I should say so too. Will you be angry if I be plain with you?

GEORGE. Certainly not.

RICHARD. Your prospects are even better than you imagine; but there is one in London, who, by his raahness and imprudence, may unwittingly destroy them all.

GEORGE. Who is that one?

RICHARD. Do you not know?

GEORGE. No.

RICHARD. Nor suspect?

GEORGE. Nor suspect.

RICHARD. Will you see me to-morrow evening?

GEORGE. Willingly.

RICHARD. Let it be at eight, then, on Ludgate Hill, opposite Benson's, and I will show you some-

thing and some one. Good-bye! Here's Jack Nelson, and I've something to say to him. Ah, Jack, how are you?—(*Exit RICHARD with JACK, R. U. E., whistling "My love is like the red, red rose."* GEORGE stands transfixed for a moment, looking after his friend, and then hurries off, L. U. E.)

## CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH RICHARD GRAHAM SHOWS ME MY STEPFATHER, PHILIP MARSTON.

WILL eight o'clock never come? Clocks and watches conspire against me, and time itself seems to stand still. Tick, tick, tick, and with unexampled gravity the pendulum describes curved lines innumerable, but without any influence that I can see upon the hands, and I look and look until it (the pendulum) seems a tongue wagging itself at me in derision. Were I a rich man, I should demolish that same clock, tongue and all, and commission that very Mr. Benson—whose name had travelled a little beyond Cannon Street, and of whose shop door I was that evening to make so unwarrantable a use—to supply its place forthwith. But I am not, so there it remains, detested, but unpunished.

The house (I mean the Cannon Street house) is closed, but in defiance of the clocks; and daylight seems to fade from out the sky. It is but half-past six, so the guilty, erring, St Paul's says, and ninety minutes of mortal agony are still in store for me. I wander up and down the Hill, until my presence, too oft repeated, attracts the notice of a rather undersized "Bobby," and I am peremptorily ordered to "move on." I desire to know (I hardly know *why*) the precise amount of discretionary power vested in that individual, and by what authority he thus interferes with the liberty of the subject. In order to afford me the fullest information on the point, I am seized by the collar, dragged to the station, and all but locked up for the night. An abject apology, however, a

handsome tribute to the ability, ingenuity, and courtesy of the insulted officer, and I am released with a caution, and that caution is not lost. Have I ever, since that memorable evening, now twenty years ago, ventured to dispute a policeman's right to deal with the persons and properties of Her Majesty's subjects in any way that might seem best unto himself? Did I ever hazard a remonstrance when that worthy chose to try the strength of his truncheon, upon some drunken, unresisting wretch's head, or dragged through the mire a hungry, helpless woman? Never!—emphatically! never! The man with the injured head might complain, and the hungry woman express a desire to walk, I, priest and Levite-like, "passed by on the other side," and left them to their fate.

But, after all, eight o'clock, like the dinner hour of "Trotty Veck," did come, and a few minutes after Richard Graham made his appearance.

We walked side by side, and I fancied that he could hear my heart beat against my ribs.

"Let us leave this thoroughfare," he said, "for our way lies westwards." We did so, and having turned up Farringdon Street, and to the left, walked for a quarter of an hour through byways and alleys, till at length we arrived at a small, neat, quiet street containing about twenty houses, with the doors painted a dark green, and their brass knockers shining like burnished gold. Two or three of these houses had their blinds drawn closely down, and at one of them Graham stopped and knocked. After a slight delay, the door was opened by a grey-headed, serious-looking man of about sixty, dressed in a dark livery, and having a white handkerchief in his hand. He bowed gravely as we passed him, and Graham, leading the way up the staircase, and stopping at a room on the first landing, pushed open the door, and walked in.

The room was small, and in keeping with the house, but com-



fortably, if not luxuriously furnished. There were chairs covered with dark green leather, two lounges to match, a handsome, crimson-clothed table, a side-board, a few choice pictures, and a splendid mirror. There was no over-crowding, or over-furnishing; everything was in the greatest harmony, and the best possible taste.

"I have brought you here," said Graham, throwing himself upon a sofa, "to see one who, if he do not quickly leave this country, may (unwittingly, I believe) destroy all your future prospects in life. My uncle is a strange man, and if he once knew that this person was a connection of yours, you would not occupy your present position for half-an-hour."

"To whom do you allude?" I asked, in great anxiety.

"Why, to your stepfather, of course, Philip Marston."

"My stepfather!" I repeated. "How do you know him? I thought that by this time he was far away, and that he had already begun a life of rectitude, and thus atoned, in some measure, for his past offences."

"Come this way, then, and judge."

He rose and crossed the room, touched with a single finger what appeared to me a medallion of Marie Antoinette hanging against the wall, but which, flying back noiselessly, disclosed a small round window of about the diameter of a crown piece, and shining like silver in the beams of the setting sun. "Look," said he, extending one hand, and placing the other firmly upon my shoulder, "look and satisfy yourself."

He pushed me to the glass, and in an instant the scene changed.

A splendid saloon, gorgeously furnished with chairs, sofas, ottomans, sideboards, pictures, and full length, blazing mirrors. Lights, suspended from the ceiling, threw their glare upon the faces of men of all ages, from the fair-haired beardless youth of twenty to the hoary head of eighty. Some were laughing, with their hands thrust

lightly into their pockets, or nodding familiarly to their companions; others pouring recklessly down their throats glass after glass of some intoxicating fluid, and then mingling with a crowd of fellow-men. Others, again, pale and trembling, every muscle of their ghastly faces twitching and quivering as they stood round tables, holding cues and dice-boxes in their hands; while others still lounged upon sofas, as calm and unmoved as the great pictures of some of the "old masters," which looked down upon them from their heights above. Piles of notes and heaps of gold lay strewn in all directions, but each under the eye of its respective owner. Inferior men glided noiselessly about, bowing, smiling, handing refreshments when required, and then dropping quietly into their appointed places.

I could not stir—my worst fears were realised—I was in a "gaming house"—the men were gamblers; many, doubtless, with broken-hearted wives and starving children; and oh, horror of horrors! high above the highest in that accursed throng rose the bloodless face and flashing eyes of Philip Marston.

Aye, there he stood, separated from me by only a thin wall, almost as young, and fresh, and vigorous-looking as when on that dreary, starless night, I bearded him in the lonely streets of London.

I tottered back, my senses forsook me, and I sank, overpowered and helpless, into a chair.

When I again looked round, the scene had changed, and Graham was lying upon the sofa, and Marie Antoinette smiling at me from out the medallion as before.

"Come, George, rouse yourself," are the first words that I hear.

I start as if from a dream.

"You are surprised," and Graham came towards me.

"Surprised!" I exclaimed; "I am horrified! Take me from this place, I dare not stay longer in it. Oh, that man——"

"What man?"

"What man? Why Mar——"

"Pshaw!" said Graham, carelessly; "there is no Marston here, he gave up that name long ago. He is now plain Mr. Neville, traveller for a 'Light Wine Company.' Twelve months ago he was Symond Faulkner, a cigar importer. Two years ago he was something else."

"Oh, this is terrible! But tell me, do you know him?"

"Do I know myself? Alas, too well! George, until the last six months, I was just such another as Marston, but since I have gone among these Loaders, I have become a new man, and avoided the dice-box as I would the d—l himself. It's extraordinary all the good contact with such people does one."

"I thought he was in Paris," said I, after a pause. "I know he intended going there six or eight months ago."

"Well, and he did go, and made a pretty mess of it, too; got into some confounded scrape there, and quitted it soon after. I believe he fought some Englishman, and got a bullet in his chest. How the deuce the fellow managed to get over it so soon is more than I can tell. Now, my advice to you, and I give it in pure friendship, is, to try and induce him to leave the country."

"Alas!" I replied, "I have but little influence with the man. He would not listen to me."

"He is often to be found at a low tavern near the City theatre, called 'The Shoreditch,' where, probably, you might, some time or another, get an opportunity of speaking to him; here it would be dangerous."

"But how did you know that he had been my mother's husband?"

"Simply because he told me so himself."

"Marston?"

"Aye, Marston himself. One night, in confidence, he gave me his history, whom he married, where and how his wife died, the names of her son and daughter, one of whom he thought was dead, and the other clerk to a merchant somewhere in the City. Putting

all these together, I had but little difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that his George Allen and my George Allen were one and the same person, and that Philip Marston, alias Neville, alias Faulkner, was his stepfather."

I groaned aloud.

"Oh! confound it!" exclaimed Graham, jumping up. "I'm sorry I told you anything about it, but if it were not that I thought it would serve you, hang the bit of me would have done it."

There was another pause, which I broke by inquiring (though there was no necessity for my doing so) if we were really in a gambling house.

"Of the very worst kind," he replied; "but here we are quite safe, and free from observation. You may remark that in this room you cannot hear the sound of a human voice, and yet I know that even now, whilst I speak, there are fifty men within a few yards of us shouting and swearing, to the serious injury of both their lungs and their morals. You will say, perhaps, this is contrary to the 'laws of acoustics.' Not at all. I will explain it in a word."

I begged that he would not trouble himself to do so, and expressed a wish to leave the house without further delay.

"With all my heart," said he, with alacrity, and we soon found ourselves in the street.

The night was a lovely one, but a little dark, and thick clouds were driving through the sky, apparently at a rapid pace. We sauntered up the Strand, and as far as Somerset House, without speaking a word. Here a great crowd had collected round a drunken costermonger, who was successfully defying the united efforts of three policemen, a tinker, and a bookbinder, to remove him to Bow Street. We cleared ourselves of the crowd with some difficulty, but only to knock against a tall, muffled figure, just emerging from Fleet Street. The man (for the muffled figure was that of a man) turned sharply round, dropped the collar of his



coat, disclosing, as he did so, the huge, inexpressive face of Simon Jackson.

"Jackson!" exclaimed Graham, starting, and looking a little surprised, "Jackson, is that you?"

"Yes, Master Richard," said the rascal, quietly transferring his overcoat from his shoulders to his arm as he spoke. "I am going as far as Westminster, to see an old friend, who sails for Quebec in a day or two; and, you know, we shouldn't forget old friends."

"Certainly not. But why are you muffled up in that extraordinary manner? You look more like a man bent upon some deed of darkness, than a quiet, well-conducted, though not over rational mortal, as I believe you to be."

"The rheumatics, Master Richard—the rheumatics—I'm getting an awful martyr to them. George (I should say Mr. Allen now, I suppose) knows all about it."

"Yes," said I, smiling; "poor Simon suffers a great deal, now and then."

"Why, Jackson, you never told me this before."

"I didn't like to trouble you, Mr. Graham; you have trouble enough upon your hands, I'm sure, without thinking of me," whined my old bedfellow.

"I must get the doctor to call upon you, Simon, and see what can be done; I'm sure you want a little rest, and a holiday just now, wouldn't be entirely out of place."

The fellow's eye glistened. "Oh, thank you, Master Richard, it's really too good of you to think of me—you, who have so much to think of. But I'll not keep you standing in the street, and so good bye, gentlemen both."

He was gone among the crowd in a second of time, his tall, spectral form throwing its darkened shadow along the path, and guiding our eyes to him as he struggled onward.

"He is an odd fellow, is he not?" I whispered to Graham.

"He is a rogue!" was the quick response; and the remainder of our walk was pursued in silence.

## THE LOVE OF FLOWERS.

"Who loves not  
These fairy people of the leafy woods?  
Children of storm and sun! climbers of  
The mountain's side! or loiterers on the banks  
Of the young rivulet! The love of flowers  
Is an inherent passion in the heart  
Of man; it never dies."

"Nature," by B. B. WALE.

"Our human souls  
Cling to the grass and water brooks."

ATHANASE.

THE sentiments of the human heart are instinctive; they are not the result of observation, study, or education; they are born with us, and are continually struggling to break forth, and fling their fulgid light upon the outer world, like spring sunshine, when clouds begin to break. Thus it is, that the noblest and most elevating sympathies and aspirations of the soul are unteachable, not to be imparted. They can never be infused from within, till they are awakened by the kindred sympathies of beauty and moral worth. Every man's heart is a well of noble sympathies, and a fountain of the purest affections; although many, forsooth, get so encased with incrustations of worldliness, that their lives become sordid catalogues of apathy and distrust. The love of flowers is one of the most universal sentiments of the heart. In childhood, we roam through lanes and fields, and amid the leafy garniture of woods, to hold communion with their lovely forms, and to listen to their silent language of perfume, till our eyes fill with strange tears of pleasantness. And as we grow into the stern ranks of manhood, and mingle in the busy marts of the world, the heart still cherishes its love for flowers; and when the spring sunshine falls upon our path, sweet memories come over the spirit, and the heart seems to gush with melodies of its own, babbling wild and disjointed music, like the rippling of a summer brook, or the tones of an Æolian harp, when summer winds play soft and low. And even in hoary age, when

time has ploughed deep furrows in our brow, and the snows of life's winter lie upon our heads, this passion dies not. The eye, which was dim and lustreless, kindles with new light; and the step, which was feeble and tottering, becomes firm and steadfast, when nature sheds her sweet influences around us, in the azure beauty of the sky, the fragrant breath of the fields, the anthems of the birds, and the unnumbered flowers which mantle the earth with loveliness.

Nature is the embodiment of the Divinemind, the incarnate rendered manifest; and every passion and sentiment of the human soul has its analogue in the green world which exists around us. Flowers embody the spirituality of all nature; their forms and hues are types of all moral beauty, and purity of sentiment; and they are symbolical of the highest truths of human nature.

The love of flowers is, then, but a manifestation of the upward tendencies of the soul, its aspirations for the good, the beautiful, and the true. Such a love will grow in spite of all untoward influences, making holy and pure the bosom wherein it resides, and giving joys, from which the rude clamour of the world is quite estranged, and which sparkle along the pathway of life, like blossoms in the asphodel meadows of Apollo.

Flowers are friends that change not. In youth, they greet us with their sunny smiles; in age, they speak to us of boyhood, and lead us back to the scenes made dear by recollections of home: year after year, as we hasten onward to complete the cycle of our being, they still abide with us, and offer solace to our aching hearts. And when sickness and sorrow have broken down the spirit, and we lie down to rest, with the red earth for a pillow, the flowers come in joyful troops to guard our resting-place



from rash footsteps and unhallowed intrusions. And then the green grass, and clover, and sweet herbs—made fragrant by the soft dews and early glances of the sun—sanctify the air which sweeps above our graves; and all day long the grasses wave in the wind, and the flowers sing sweet dirges over the green mounds which mark our resting-place; and at night, the sentinel stars come forth to keep watch over us, and the flowers become sorrowful in the still silence, and gush with dewy tears.

Every human heart is a well of pure feeling, an inexhaustible spring of deepest love; albeit its green ways and quiet avenues may be choked up with misanthropy and care: yet, within that silent chamber are locked up sympathies and aspirations of which an angel might be proud. Many and great are the struggles of our better life to free itself from the shackles of custom, and to shake off the dust of chicanery and the world's cold disdain. Oh! come with me, thou toiler in the dusty city; shake off the cloud from thy brow; forget, for a while, the pence and shillings for which thou hast sold thy soul; and I will lead thee under green forest trees, over soft mossy hillocks, and beside cool running brooks, where the water flags play with each other, and look at their own merry faces in the glassy stream. Come to the thick brake, and lie down upon the grass till thy soul swells within thee. Stay, the noonday heat will make the blackbird and the robin silent, and the brown forest will lie dreaming in noonday repose. Now, let thy soul swim out in a broad tide of love, let the tears flow into thine eyes, while gazing upon the fresh moss, and listening to the drowsy hummings of the air. Doth thy heart heave and throe with emotions of thankfulness to God, for making the earth so fair, so redolent of beauty, in its garniture of flowers? and for having scattered these silent teachers up and down the world as orators of perfume, and links of beauty, to bind

our souls to nature in all time, and wheresoever we may be? The soul must be fed; we must have inspiration from stars, and sunbeams, and flowers; and not be always chewing corn. We must hear the voice of God in the elements, in the winds and the waves, the rattling of the thunder, and the howling of the storm. We must see His face in every flower, and feel His breath in the odour of forest leaves and banks of wild thyme. Now, dost thou not long to be a child once more, and to live out thy days in one frenzy of joy? Wouldst thou shrink from cold hearts, and disappointments, and regrets, and live for flowers only?—to gather round the glowing visions of floral loveliness; to fill the air with angel shapes and rainbow hues; to breathe an atmosphere of perfume like that which floats over the green pastures of Paradise; to feel the sense overwhelmed with droppings of rich music, as though angel lutes were tuning their anthems to the Omnipotent; and, amid the grand symphonies of nature, to feel the soul hallowed and becalmed, as a soft wind playing at twilight over a summer sea?

Nature is the property of all. Flowers are the ministers of her commonwealth. They bloom for old and young, rich and poor; and to every true heart become hallowed messengers from heaven! The great duty of flowers is to teach us to be always children, to be ever fresh, and budding into new beauty; for the poetry of our lives is all that can ennoble us, and make earth an abode of peace and loveliness.—It is in the morning of existence that—

"Hope looks out  
Into the dazzling sheen, and fondly talks  
Of summer, and Love comes, and all the air  
Rings with wild harmonies."

And shall we, because time has led us a little further towards the tomb, become so engrossed with sordid pursuits as to shun the world of beauty, the creation of poetry, which exists around us in the living semblance of perpetual

youth? Oh! let the blood of the violet trickle in our veins. Let us mingle with the sweet children of the woods, and hold communings with nature in her own peaceful solitudes. We will gaze on the forms and hues of flowers, and drink in their beauty until we are intoxicated with joy. We will listen with rapt delight to the gurgling of gentle waters, and the waving of the leafy trees. We will live the poetry of existence, and choose the bird, the bee, the butterfly, and the flower, for our companions. We will lie in green meads where daisies grow, and bask us in the sunshine; lie by the streamlet's brim, and plait rushes, and talk to our own images in the glassy waters; hide in flowery nooks and dingles, and murmur snatches of wild old songs, till we laugh ourselves into a very incantation of gladness; we'll build fairy palaces with a geometry of sunbeams, and climb upwards on our dreamy destiny till the universe becomes our temple. Oh! what bosom but is seared and marked with traces of deep wounds, some freshly bleeding, and never to be effaced? What head, but has been a burning furnace of suffering when laid upon the pillow of reflection? What soul, but has fretted and worn within its gloomy prison in anguish and sorrow? And these sufferings come not upon us in the spring-time of life, but when we are blushing into summer; then the first disconsolating tempest arises, and a love unrequited, a friendship made false—will make havoc among the buds of hope, and our full-blown flowers of joy, withering, scattering, and destroying all within its reach. Few are the hearts that are yet unscathed by the burning finger of affliction! yet pine not, for a morbid regret for past pleasures is neither manly nor noble, and the steadfastness of hope should be our joyful inheritance. When disappointments and the endurance of grief sweep the bloom from the cheek, and the lustre from the eye, the heart comes back to beauty for its solace, and

finds in the forms and hues of flowers, consolation, comfort, and renewed hope; for they are symbols of infancy and innocence, and inlets to a new and beatified existence.

The soul clings to beauty, but it needs a constant intercourse with nature to keep the love of beauty fresh and vigorous within us. How little do they, who rise when the sun is in the mid-heaven, and spend the precious hours in luxury and listlessness, know of the intense charms of which existence is capable; they have no care for the wide-stretching landscape, and the lone river side; they are strangers to the cheering influences which raise the heart to an excess of exhilaration, and give the firm footstep an untiring energy and elasticity; the odour of the wild cannot refresh their languid senses; they cannot lie down upon the broad heath-land, with its wide sheets of purple blossoms glowing in the sunlight, and feel the heart expand with an excess of feeling far too deep for words; the music of many voices they know not; the charms of poetry, and above all, of love—love, deep, passionate, and pure—they know nought about, and existence to them is but a passive and passionless dream. We well remember an old man, we can call to memory his snowy locks, and trembling step, whose early days had been passed in the grassy glades of the New Forest, but whose fate, in later years, had been to linger on in penury between the bricks walls of this great city. In a narrow court, amid squalor and wretchedness, where the houses were too close for the sunlight ever to fall upon the ground, and where, on the brightest day in June, only a thin, wretched strip of blue appeared above, had this old man passed the latest years of his life; but he never forgot the haunts and recollections of his childhood—the old woods, the giant trees, and the flowers of dingle and dell; and when, in May, the little children wandered out from their wretched homes, to breathe the pure air of heaven in the golden



meadows, his eyes would glisten with delight to accept their little gifts of buttercups and daisies, and many times have we seen him in an exultation of feeling, at the remembrance of the scenes and associations of his childhood, till he seemed choking with emotion, and suffused with silent tears. So deep in the heart is the love of flowers, that, once awakened, it becomes the well-spring of a renewed and beautiful existence. Let us then live on flowers from the fields, and golden beams of the blue ether!

It was the love of flowers which gave tone and vigour to the poets of old, and made their pages redolent with perfume and loveliness. The wisdom of Solomon was so much the greater that he loved flowers, and it is the same sentiment which embalms the pages of Spenser, Chaucer, Clare, Carrington, Gilbert White, and Chatterton, and makes them teem with living beauty, and a lustre, like unclouded sunshine in the month of June. If the love of flowers was not inherent in our hearts, we should not feel the freshness and brilliancy of their descriptions of nature, sweeping over the spirit like a fragment of old music, or breathings from a blossom-scented valley. Now we can go away to the silvery streams in company with old Izaak Walton, where the whirling currents play with the reeds and water flags, and the green willows bow low to kiss the flowing stream; then we remember the milkmaid, and the draught of cow's milk; the shelter under the honeysuckle hedge; the fish fried in cowslips; the little sleeping room, smelling sweetly of lavender; and the flowers, which old Izaak thought too beautiful to be seen at any other times than holidays. The good old fellow delighted in his angle, and he learnt to love nature all the more, and although we regard angling as an unnecessary and wanton cruelty, in itself destitute of poetry, yet we love the old man, who in the innocence of his heart could sing—

"I in these flowery meads would be,  
These crystal streams should solace me;

To whose harmonious, babbling noise,  
I, with my angle, would rejoice."

If we could have walked with him once or twice on his rambles, we would have taught him, by the simple lesson of a flower, that he could enjoy the pleasures of rippling brooks, and blue sunshine, while the finny creatures of the pools were left to sport away their lives in peace. Pleasant it is to wander forth, as did Solomon of old, "into the fields, or to lodge in the villages, to see the fruits of the valley, and to go into the gardens and gather lilies;" and to inhale the perfumes of the banks and fields. The people of Oriental climes have the love of nature more deeply infused into their hearts than those of cold and cloudy lands; there, nature lavishes her beauties with a tenfold profusion and loveliness, and the blood flows more warmly in the veins, and the hearts of men beat with a warmer enthusiasm. The royal garden of an eastern prince is called the "Garden of God," a name which is usually supposed to refer to the Garden of Eden, and a promise adapted to the love of nature and of virtue. To the faithful follower of the Prophet, the Koran promised greetings of "good tidings, gardens through which rivers flow, and ye shall remain therein for ever."

From the first dawning of the world, the love of flowers has grown within the heart of humanity, and, to woman, has been a life-like consolation, and a hope, steadfast and true. Our first mother, when breathing out her life in a long dream of joy in that happy garden, where flowers were ever budding and blooming around in innumerable forms of loveliness, and where tuneful choirs of the air, and delicious odours of myrtle bowers, stole upon the yielding senses till they were steeped in one deep agony of bliss; fresh and fair from the hands of God, as a gentle bud laved by the unsunned drops of silver dew, and with a soul, spotless and pure as the closing rose at eventide, or the starry cerulean which overhangs her perfumed

bowers after nightfall,—she communed with the forms of loveliness which lent their charms to beautify her happy home, and flowers, as visible symbols of purity and holiness, were endeared to her in deep and passionate love, and she breathed out her soul in harmony with their hallowed perfumes. But, oh! what pain and torture for her heart, when, as the requiting of her own sin, with the sole companion of her bosom, she was banished from that abode of peace, the fairest home this earth has ever seen, to sojourn in the plains and valleys of an unknown world! Well might her sorrowing heart pour out its woe in tears and vain regrets—

"Must I then leave thee, Paradise? thus leave  
Thee, native soil! these happy walks and shades,  
Fit haunts of Gods!"

\* \* \*

"O flowers,  
That never will in other climates grow;  
My early visitation, and my last  
At even, which I bred up with tender hand  
From the first opening buds, and gave ye names;  
Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank  
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial  
fount?"

MILTON.

Such a love is in every woman's heart, and if unchecked, would tend to the development of the highest social and domestic virtues, and would secure, by a natural and unyielding bond, a recognition of that ideal beauty, and personification of virtue, which is the permanent basis of all social comfort, and the unity of the highest individual and domestic relations.

The flowers of the wild have ever a greater hold upon the affections than the nurtured beauties of the garden or conservatory. Wild flowers form a chief part of the love of country, they are our associates in early life, and recal, in after years, the scenes and recollections of our youth; they are the true philanthropists of nature, and their generous and smiling faces give us kindly greetings and sweet memories of the first impulses of love and friendship; they bloom for all who care to seek them, and smile in the summer's sun, and brave the winter's sleet right valiant, bonnily and true. The poor mechanic may leave his dull bench when Sunday

comes, and breathe the fresh air on the green hills, and gather cowslips and daffodils to cheer him, and to teach him that although his frame may be begrimed and emaciated by the toil of weekly drudgery, yet he has within him a soul capable of feeling, and a spirit which can woo the inspiration of nature, and grow green again in the love of flowers. And why else were wild flowers sent if not to teach and soothe us by their æsthetic loveliness, no less than by their hues and odours, and the links of beauty which they throw around our hearts. "What God has created, that call thou not useless," and wherefore shall we become heedless of them, albeit that they neither feed our stomachs nor clothe our backs; enough that they are beautiful, and that all beauty is the soul's special inheritance; the heart must have something to love or it becomes desolate, and the wild flowers of the field are ministers from heaven to teach us love, and to kindle holy sympathies in our breasts—

"And such are daffodils  
With the green world they live in; and clear rills  
That for themselves a cooling covert make  
'Gainst the hot season—the mid forest brake,  
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms."

KEATS.

Of all things sent from Heaven to minister to man's happiness, flowers are the most gentle, confiding, and unresisting; he may crush them beneath his footstep, and their only murmurs are made in the sweet scent which they immediately emit; they still smile in his face, and love him as tenderly as before; they may be plucked and scattered to the four winds of heaven, but they bloom again in gladness and delight; they may be gathered by the soft white hand of beauty, to gladden the eye which has never known a tear, and by the hard and iron hand of toiling industry, to perfume and beautify a close and murky dwelling-place. For the holiness of Nature is lofty and pure, and to appropriate the noble gifts of the Creator is a more glorious purpose than to stem the tide of human love and sympathy by bitterness and cold disdain.



\* It was the awakening of the sentiment of love for flowers which brought back the prisoner of Fenestrella to the acknowledgment of a God. Maddened by solitude, and exhausted by profligacy, and the unceasing anxieties of a troubled soul, he denied his Maker, and cast himself into the black and desolate regions of infidelity; but, while expiating, within the walls of a prison, for the rash impetuosities of his youth, a little flower springs up between the chinks of the stones, and becomes to him a message of love and mercy, while his soul is on the very threshold of moral despair. So, too, was the heart of the botanist, Douglas, cheered in his toilsome wanderings in America, when he met with a blooming primrose high up on the bald summit of a rocky mountain, where the clouds rolled in darkness, and mingled their dense whiteness with the giant masses of eternal snow. The explorers of a rocky mountain of the west were, in a like manner, comforted, and reminded of the flowery valleys and fertile plains which they had left far behind them, when, amid the desolate and barren hills, where not even a blade of grass was to be seen for miles, they saw a little bee, humming along as if in quest of flowers, and in a region many thousand feet above the level of the sea. Who has forgotten the exultation of Vaillant, over a flower in the torrid wastes of Africa? or the affecting mention of the influence of a flower upon the mind of Mungo Park, in the time of suffering and despondency, in the heart of the same savage country?

Schimmelpenninck\* tells an anecdote of the philosopher of Geneva, which illustrates in a pleasing manner the close bond of union between mind of the highest order and the simple beauties of nature. During the earliest and happiest years of the life of Rousseau, he was one day walking with a beloved friend. It was summer time, the evening was calm, quiet, and serene. The

sun was setting in glory, and spreading his sheeted fires over the western sky, and upon the unrippled surface of the lake; making the still water transparent with a vivid and glowing light. The friends sat on a soft, mossy bank, enjoying the calm loveliness of the scene, and conversing upon the varied phases of human life, in the unaffected sincerity of true friendship. At their feet was a bright tuft of the lovely Germander speedwell, covered with a profusion of brilliant blue blossoms. Rousseau's friend pointed to the little flower, the *veronica chamædrys*, as wearing the same expression of cheerfulness and innocency as the scene before them. Thirty years passed away! Care-worn, persecuted, disappointed, acquainted with poverty and grief, known to fame, but a stranger to peace, Rousseau again visited Geneva. On such a calm and lovely evening as, thirty years before, he had conversed with the friend of his bosom, and had received a teaching from the simple beauty of a flower, he again was seated on the selfsame spot. The scene was the same. The sun went down in golden majesty as before; the birds sung as cheerfully in the soft light of eventide; the crimson clouds floated solemnly in the western sky; and the waters of the lake were skimmed by glittering boats as heretofore. But the house wherein the first feelings of love and friendship, and the firstfruits of his genius had budded, was now levelled with the ground. His dearest friend was sleeping in the grave. The generation of villagers who had partaken the bounty of the same beneficent hand was passed away, and none remained to point out the green sod where that benefactor lay. He walked on pensively, the same bank, tufted with the same knot of bright-eyed speedwell, caught his eye. The memories of past years of trouble and sorrow came upon him; he heaved a sigh, and turned away, weeping bitterly.

"The plant that bloomed along the shore,  
Where there in happier hours he strayed,

\* "Theory of Beauty and Deformity."

Still flourished gaily as before,  
In all its azure charms arrayed;  
There still it shone in modest pride,  
While all his flowers of joy had died.

"It seemed to say, 'Hadst thou, like me,  
Contented bloom'd within the bed  
That Nature's hand had formed for thee,  
When first her dew were on thee shed,  
Then had thy blossoms never known  
The blasts that o'er their buds have blown.'"

Some years ago the Running Horse Inn, at the town of Mickleham, was kept by a worthy rustic, whose love of nature made him more a hero than a boniface. His house was much frequented by botanists, on account of the beauty of the surrounding scenery, and the frequency of choice specimens in the contiguous lanes and fields. One of the last acts of the honest vintner's life was to call his daughter to his pillow, and to say,—  
"Mary, it is a fine morning; go and see if scilla verna is come in flower." May the children inherit their father's virtues! Then may botanists continue to find at this humble Inn, cleanliness, civility, and comfort; a trowel to dig up their plants, and even a vasculum to secure them.

It is because flowers are such lovely emblems of innocence, so like the merry face of childhood, that they have a large place in our best affections. They ever remind us of our days of boyhood and buoyancy; when Nature, our fond mother, sat upon the hills, clapping her hands with joy, and giving us all the earth, with its landscapes and rocks, and hills and forests, for our school and playground; when the young soul was just fresh from its home in heaven, and not yet corrupted and defiled by a cold, callous, and calculating world; when quiet nooks enclosed us with their greenness, and we found companions in the wild bee, and the morning breezes, and in everything which wore the impress of beauty, whether animate or inanimate; when all things were clothed with beauty, and were worshipped with a veneration beyond utterance; when each leaf and flower was a palace of sweet sights and scents, and the bending boughs were woven into fairy bowers of

enchantment, and touched us with heaven's own glorious sunshine; when we picked up lessons of love and delight by river sides, by brooks, and hawthorn paths, in quiet glens and in green fields, and inhaled, from every passing breeze, health, intelligence, and joy; when all things grew and expanded into broad and living hope, calm, lovely, promising, and serene, as a bright vision by a sick man's couch. And then, too, the holy memories which they embalm in their folded buds and undewed chalices—memories fraught with sorrow, but not less welcome to our hearts. Tender recollections, perchance of parents now sleeping in green repose in the ivied churchyard, though far divided from us by a gulf of worldly cares and sordid interests, no longer controlling our actions with a judicious watchfulness and care, no longer checking us, as we are about to pluck the fatal weeds of folly, and to inhale the breath of the sinful blossoms which pleasure scatters in our path—beautiful and fragrant, but fraught with the bane of misery—luring us to tarry in voluptuous bowers, and steep our souls in sensual delights, where repentance and self-reproach, for precious time thus squandered and irrevocably lost, come upon us as a reward, and give, in return for excess of light, a maddening despair and blindness.

"Oh, lovely flowers! the earth's rich diadem,  
Emblems are ye of heaven, and heavenly joy,  
And starry brilliance in a world of gloom;  
Peace, innocence, and guileless infancy  
Claim sisterhood with you, and holy is the tie."

And what so pure and worthy of our love as the sweet flowers which bloom along our pathway, ever seeking to find a place in our bosoms, and to blend, by association of ideas, the experiences with the pleasures of life; refreshing the worn mind with waters from the untainted fountain of pure feeling, which flows from the emerald meadows of childhood, and leading us from the world's thorny and flowerless desert to a mirage of green olives and living oases! How often, when disease has wasted



the frame, and anxiety and suffering have well-nigh done their work, the sufferer awaits calmly the approaching dissolution, and stands, pausing on the brink of another world in majestic hope and confidence—the joys, sorrows, and fears of life's fevered dream all unheeded and banished from the memory—and the scenes and associations of childhood come flooding upon the memory in all their pristine freshness and beauty! The soul, as it grows near to God, becomes more pure and holy; and the love of flowers breaks forth in a new and tenfold beauty, even when the body is ready for its rest, for flowers are antetypes of the angelic, and meet tokens of the world of beauty, which lies beyond the vestibule of the future life.

It was the beloved and much-lamented L. E. L. who sung—

"We like the mockery that flowers  
Exhibit on the mound  
Beneath which lie the happy hours  
Hearts dreamt but never found."

It was the gentle-hearted Keats—the pure soul—

"Who grew  
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,  
And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew—"

who said, when on the couch of death, and before he passed into the skies like the dew-drop exhaled from the loving bosom of a flower, that he "felt the daisies already growing over him." And so, too, Carrington, who suffered the disappointments and regrets of a weary and toilsome life, was compelled to say, that—

"Songs may cease,  
Though carolled in the faithless Spring, and Hope  
May prove a flatterer, and Love may plume  
His wings for flight, and every flower that blows  
Be blasted by the tempest's breath."

Mrs. Hemans believed that "the fine passion for flowers is the only one which long sickness leaves untouched with its chilling influence. Often, during weary illness of mine, have I looked upon new books with indifference, when, if a friend has sent me a few flowers, my heart has leaped up to their dreamy hues and odours, with a sudden sense of renovated child-

hood, which seems to me one the mysteries of our being."

And what if there were no flowers? Why, then the creations of the poet, and the lovely visions of beauty and innocence which visit every pure mind would have but a vague, dreamy, and indefinite existence, and would be destitute of the life and vigour which ever characterises them, when associated and built up with the green things of the earth. They are such living types of loveliness and innocence, and of all that is pleasing and graceful, that the poet would be bereft of his most beautiful images if they were to perish. We must cease to compare young lips to blushing roses, and white brows to unspotted lilies. We must cease to regard winning eyes as violets half hidden under broad leaves, but peeping out in the sunshine to laugh right merrily. The sweet voice of her we love would no longer be as a soft breeze, kissing its way through twined roses or hawthorns. We could no longer welcome the young soul into the world with tokens of flowers, or make the graves of the beloved holy and beautiful by green hillocks and sprinklings of blossoms, and which are emblems to us of the eternal summer beyond the grave, where, amid the starry fields of that world of beauty, flowers bloom on for ever, and never, never fade! Oh, flowers! ye bring us lovely visions in the time of spring, and pleasant remembrances of childhood's scenes, and of sweet faces dear to us in youth, when the heart was filled with love and tender sympathies; ye people our dreams with forms of shadowy beauty, and embroideries of richest hue; and truly, without your lovely forms, this earth would be dark, desolate, and dead!

The physical history of our world teaches us that flowers were created for spiritual, rather than material purposes. They were sent by God to give us constant revelations of the beautiful, and to keep us in the perpetual presence of innocence and virtue. Geology tells us that

in those dim and distant eras of our world's history, prior to the creation of man, the earth was peopled with mighty monsters, and strange moving forms, and dense black forest jungles. Then the mammoth and the mastodon shook the old woods with their ponderous footsteps. There were giant ferns waving their rich green fronds in the morning air, tall trees of every hue and shade, uplifting their heads proudly to the blue heaven. Brakes and brackens matted and interwoven, and tenanted by the jackal, the shaggy bison, and the sabre-toothed tiger. There were deep forest fastnesses where the luxuriant trees locked themselves together overhead, and were clothed with foliage so thick and close that the sunlight never pierced through them; but a dim twilight shadow reigned about the massive boles and the ground below, where the fallen leaves were piled in thick masses, was at mid-day enveloped in the gloom of night. Yet, although there were birds of gorgeous plumage, and trees and shrubs in unnumbered forms of greatness and majesty, there were no lovely flowers! All the blossoms which grew in the subterranean forests of the then half-formed world were destitute of beauty, or like those of fens or mosses, scarcely to be seen. And why so? Because flowers were to fulfil a mission of poesy and moral truth, and to fill the soul of man with beauty; but until he should come to inhabit a world which was henceforth to be his own, flowers were not needed, and hence did not exist. Then, when the fulness of time had come for him to take up his abode on the world which had just burst into new life, he was to wake, as it were, into an existence surfeited with loveliness; for "the Lord God planted a Garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man to dress it and to keep it." And so the Great Mover of the universe has bountifully given us these perfumed forms of loveliness, as teachers

of love and faith, and to fill the heart with beauty and with joy. The spots where temples and altars have stood, and where throbbing hearts have bowed fervently at the shrines of God, become at last green mounds of grass and ivy, and wild daisies and tangled copses of roses and brambles; for Time, who hurls down the strong battlement and buries the consecrated shrine in dust, cannot stop the blooming of the humble flower which grows upon the ruined keep, or between the crumbling stones of the fallen tower. Though he may dig the graves of nations, and hurl the proudest monument to ruin, yet, spring comes again to the spot made sacred by memories of the past, and scatters flowers in profusion as tokens of the supremacy of nature.

Then no longer, oh man! like Dido of old, make a fire for thine own immolation; look not so far through gloom and darkness for a shining Eden; for flowers—emblems of all love and charity—are blooming at thy very feet! Learn to live like Plato, even in the contemplation of the FIRST GOOD and the FIRST FAIR, and to die like Petrarch, gazing on the glory of the sun! Then shall thy soul awaken to a life more beauteous and fair, to a land of glorious green pastures, glittering in glorious sheen, where the wrecks of autumn are unknown, where the chills of winter fall not, but where perpetual summer blooms, with its plenitude of odorous flowers, under the sustaining breath of the Eternal. And as the spirit steps out into the splendours of this new life, it will be greeted by the unpausing hosannahs of glorified souls, swelling through the dim infinitude, upon, and upward; ever grand, vast, and orbicular; it will catch glimpses of the silvery rivers of Eden, shaded by ever-verdant trees, and fringed with flowers of eternal bloom, and will join its own melodies with the Æolian harpings of gentle seraphs ever, evermore!



## RECORDS OF WHITECROSS STREET PRISON.

The Mysterious Little Captain; Six Years' Confinement—Captain L.— and His Accusers—Facetious Retaliation—A Barrister Floored—Captain L.—'s Apologist—Commercial Wonders arising from Swindles—Introduction of Another Colonel; and a Beast—Old Daddy—The Bandit and His Concubine—The Publican's Swindle and Fix—Mr. Moss's Innocence—The French Chevalier d'Industrie and His Victim.

"SHALL I introduce you to that little busybody with the long red beard?" inquired Colonel Desperate of Moss. "'No, you would rather not; you do not like his physiognomy.' Well, perhaps you may be deceived. Nevertheless he is an extraordinary character, and has supported himself, heaven only knows how, for the seven years he has sojourned here. 'Seven years,' interrupted Moss, 'why I should have committed some dreadful act if that had been my case.' 'Indeed you would not,' returned the Colonel, 'for, however despairing and cruel our lot, none can deprive us of that blessing to the afflicted—hope!'

"But of that little man," he continued: "before he entered these walls he was styled lieutenant, but in what regiment or what army never was known. On his entrance here he got a step, as we say in the army, and was called Captain! No matter, he is up to every move upon the board, and from morning to night is constantly inditing letters; and what is more, entirely employs a man to whom he has paid 15s. per week ever since he has been here, to carry out those letters and wait for replies! He is seldom without money, and fares sumptuously every day upon every delicacy of the season. He holds quite a *levée* in the visiting-room, and many respectable people call to see him. He concocts various schemes; and it is astonishing that people are to be gulled by an individual in the doubtful position of a prisoner for debt. 'Yes, sir,' he will tell you, 'I was upon the staff of the Governor-General of India, and I may say, without boasting, that I was looked upon as his right-hand man. Those were glorious days of double batta

and rupees! In a few months I had not only acquired fame, but fortune, and I might have married a rich Begum, only, you see, that would have been *infra dig.* Ah! me, the poor thing became seriously ill, and died because I could not fulfil the only wish of her heart; and had it not been for a little tiff between us, I should have come in for a fortune of ten lacs of rupees!' Here somebody whistled, upon which the fiery little bantam wanted to vindicate his veracity and honour by a pugilistic encounter with a great brawny Yankee, who took this singular but well-known method of doubting his detail. However, I soon pacified him, but he declared that 'no one but a brother officer, who was the very soul of honour, could have prevented him from inflicting immediate personal chastisement on the delinquent.' 'You must get a step-ladder first,' said this Goliath, laughing. 'Whew!' retorted our captain, 'I spit upon you, as I would upon your d—d rascally country.'

"Tranquillity being restored, our captain became rather more communicative than usual, and I soon learned that he had been part lessee of a suburban theatre, quack doctor; had invented an infallible specific for the prevention of baldness, a beautiful hair-dye; and possessed several recipes for remedies which ought and would astonish the world. He saw a kind of Golconda looming in the distance, and eventually he would be enabled to assume, and he might say adorn, that position in life which was his own by privilege and right. In winding up he would say, 'Sir, I am an extraordinary man, and of this the world shall be fully aware before I am much older.'

"Of course," said the colonel,

"I quite agreed with him, for he is an extraordinary man."

An unusual uproar was heard at this time, occasioned by an angry discussion as to the honesty of two individuals, neither of whom possessed the most enviable characters. One of these men was a *soi-disant* Captain, called L—, who said:—"No doubt we are all honourable men till we are found out; as for myself, I do not pretend to possess a commodity so easily assumed but so difficult to maintain. I acknowledge myself to be an adventurer, which I suppose you know is the genteel name for swindler; now if that be the cognomen, I should be glad to know how many in this very respectable assembly would go unscathed?" Upon hearing this broad allusion, several persons rose from their seats in a towering passion; vowing vociferously that such language was an insult to the whole community of knights, and a disgrace to the man who uttered so great a calumny. Captain L— heeded not this outburst of indignation, but proceeded to say, "Oh, you may clamour—you may rail, but you shall not put me down. I know you well enough to be able to denounce your assumed honesty and respectability. As for myself, I will tell you in plain terms, that I never intended to pay one fraction to any one who had the weakness to trust me! People must live, and if I have neither calling nor industry to obtain my own living, why, I levy contributions upon those who are in a more fortunate position. No doubt it is a misfortune, and a very great misfortune, too, that a fellow's respectable governor did not make him a shoemaker or a tailor, but as my progenitor seems to have forgotten his duty to his son, why that son is cast upon his own resources, and must carve out a living for himself. That is precisely my case; therefore I hold that I am more sinned against than sinning." Here a stentorian voice exclaimed, "How about the pony, and the cheque upon your bankers?" "Thank you for reminding me of that very commend-

able and clever move of mine," retorted Captain L—, with the most perfect coolness; "but it comes with a very bad grace from a bankrupt convicted—you don't like that word, don't you? never mind—I repeat, *convicted* of having defrauded his creditors, for which he is now undergoing only twelve months' imprisonment in this place. You wish to hear something about a pony and a cheque, given by me upon my bankers. I will enlighten your very verdant imaginations upon that very clever *coup*, as the French say. It is well known that every true gentleman ought to have a vehicle of some kind or other; in this instance I preferred a pony, from the positive fact that it belonged to another gentleman who had no further use for him, while I stood greatly in need of—not the pony certainly, but of some of the *ochre, sugar*, or whatever other name you may choose to apply to our circulating medium. Well, I *bought* that pony, and paid for it by cheque, as many other gentleman might do under similar circumstances; and it *was* unfortunate, I admit, that there were not funds sufficient to meet that imposing document. I must say it was ungrateful, very, to coop me up in another place; because, did not I save him the keep of the animal? And his groom's conduct in giving evidence against me only showed, that however liberal you may be to those underlings (and I gave him five shillings for his trouble), they turn upon their benefactors and friends, on the first opportunity that presents itself. Well, gents, no doubt you will be glad to hear that I was acquitted—remember," he repeated, slowly and emphatically, "acquitted, and you must also be good enough to remember the concluding remarks of my counsel on that occasion. In addressing the presiding judge he said, triumphantly—'My Lord, my *respectable*'—mind, he said, 'respectable client, had ample funds to discharge this miserable sum of £18.' Upon repeating this he became almost convulsed with



ironical laughter, in which they all joined. He concluded by saying, 'What a fortunate thing it is that counsel are not sworn before pleading; for if they were, there would be no end of prosecutions for perjury, and perhaps the pillory would be reinstated in all its glory.'

One of the barristers present remarked that *some people* were very partial to riding in broughams.

"Ah, returned Captain L—, "my fat friend yonder attempts to be facetious. I remember when he was obliged to ride in that very brougham, to which he alludes—yes, and what is more, he may remember how we enjoyed the dinner and champagne we partook of at Verey's, upon the strength of driving up in the brougham; and how dexterously I extricated both by the presentation of my card alone; therefore, you can imagine nothing more striking than an aristocratic appearance and manner. We had not sixpence between us, and our coachman was obliged to fork out his dirty canvas bag, to pay the toll. However, this is another of those distressing cases, where misplaced confidence in a supposed friend may turn the milk of human kindness into prussic acid. My obese friend forgets, I am sorry to find, the many little interesting *rencontres* we have had with the police, in escaping the trammels of the law, until we were in a position to square the matters which might have been peculiarly disagreeable, under such circumstances, to both of us; and I take it to be the cruellest cut of all, when your most intimate and bosom friend denounces your industrious endeavours, and gives them harsh and disagreeable names. I could fairly weep at the ingratitude of the world; but my friend, who partook of the spoil of the Philistines, and the contributions of the confiding, ought to have been the last man to hurl a dart at the fallen fortunes of his companion. Great Cæsar fell at the base of Pompey's pillar. I, like him, must fall before a second Falstaff! For shame, my friend;

go, get thee hence, *assume* an air of gratitude, if you possess it not."

This allusion to the bulky appearance of the barrister, who was of a prodigious size, and the charges brought against him, caused the ire of that gentleman to rise into such a state of irritability as to call forth the merriment of the beholders. He could not give utterance to a syllable, but looked the very personification of a fiend. Shaking his fists in the air, he said at length, "I assure you, gentlemen, that every word this man has spoken proceeds from the fertility of his imaginative powers. The whole is one of those hallucinations frequently assumed, and pleaded as excuse for dishonourable, dishonest actions. I assure you, upon the honour of a man and a gentleman, that I never saw that individual (pointing to Captain L.) in my life, until I had the misfortune to make his acquaintance within these walls. I never rode in a brougham with him—I never dined at Verey's, and I know no more of his proceedings, except from newspaper reports, than anyone here present. The whole is a monstrous fiction—a perversion of truth—a downright damned lie!"

All this time Captain L— appeared to be suffering the most acute mental affliction, only now and then ejaculating "Oh! the world, the base ingratitude of this wicked world!"

The fat barrister, breaking from his friends, who endeavoured to restrain his passion, ran up to the captain and shaking his fist in his face, vowed that if he did not immediately and unequivocally retract every syllable he had spoken, the barrister, would break every bone in his skin.

With the most perfect nonchalance Captain L— stood his ground manfully, requesting his "dear friend" to abstain from all assaults and batteries. "If," he said, "my friend, for I must apply that endearing name to him, notwithstanding his cruel abandonment of me—if he will be calm, use the language of a gentleman,

and listen, I will convince him that it is he, and not I, who labours under delusive ideas. I am a man who never forgets his friend, in weal or woe. I can have no object in stating what I have done but to convict my friend of base ingratitude, and I think it will be but prudent to consult the medical attendant of this place upon the state of our poor friend's mind. The necessity will grieve me sorely; but, if I loved my friend less than I do, his symptoms might have passed unheeded by me,—but—” and he looked at the barrister with the most compassionate tenderness,—“but as I do love him more than tongue can tell, for his own sake, I must and will have medical advice!”

A roar of laughter followed the delivery of this address; increased by the writhing and contortions of the barrister's frame. Large drops of sweat stood upon his forehead, and many were afraid his passion would induce a fit of apoplexy. He vehemently declared that he could not, nor would not, lay under such infernal insinuations emanating from one of the most artful scoundrels under the sun. The whole was an abominable fiction, from beginning to end.

At this juncture a mediator arose in the person of the steward, who loudly proclaimed against such insinuations, and declared that the delinquent ought to meet the reprobation of every honest man.

Upon this observation, Captain L—— very coolly inquired where could be found the honest men alluded to by the last speaker; for it was palpably impossible that he should be included in such a category, for certain reasons, patent to all the world, and carefully registered in the archives of a certain criminal court, wherein might be found certain allegations touching some stray tea-warrants which unaccountably came into possession of that respectable individual, the steward.

Another tornado burst over the head of the devoted Captain L——, but he heeded it not, and con-

tinued eating strawberries and smoking his cigar at intervals; occasionally answering or rebutting the calumnious shafts hurled at him from all sides. His imperturbable indifference sorely perplexed his enemies, who found it a work of great difficulty to arouse his anger. At length he arose with great dignity and solemnity, and said: “My dear friends, if you will permit so humble an individual to address you as such: I think, for one afternoon our wage of battle ought to cease; and, as the weaker party in this combat of words, I beg to crave a truce for a few hours, or, if you prefer it, for ever. What say you?”

“Recall your words, and explain why, and upon what grounds you have attacked the honesty of two gentlemen, who——” (The speaker was the chairman.)

“Now, my dear Mr. Chairman, pray be calm,” interrupted Captain L——; “pray do not provoke an enraged lion; it is not very pleasant, I can assure you, and you may find it so to your cost. Pray, my dear sir, do not force me to break a lance with one I esteem so much, and one whom my weekly bounty assists in his extremes. Take my advice, and do not play with edged tools; sometimes they inflict very ugly wounds, difficult to heal.”

Another enemy was aroused in the head of the establishment, who fiercely demanded what was meant by these insinuations. Did Captain L—— dare to impugn the character of the chairman—did he dare to accuse him——”

“This is prodigiously unpleasant,” interrupted Captain L——, “very. I am compelled, under peculiarly distressing feelings, to allude to circumstances which in my present state of mind will harrow up my too sensitive nerves, and prostrate—destroy—that equilibrium of temper upon which I pride myself. Gentlemen,” he continued; (“Don't appeal to us,” echoed through the ward: “we despise you and your insinuations.”) “Oh, Jerusalem!” sighed the captain; “to think that I, Captain



D— L—, of Her Majesty's—  
[“Horse Marines!” shouted some  
one,] crack regiment of Dragoons,  
should come to such a pass as this.  
Not allowed to appeal to so goodly  
a company of thorough-paced—”  
(Angry frowns and doubled fists  
assumed considerable force at this  
juncture, which were relaxed upon  
hearing)—“thorough-paced—gentle-  
men! However, our chairman  
has thrown down his gauntlet, and  
I should be wanting the renowned  
courage of a true knight, were I  
not to raise it from the ground, and  
hold it aloft as a token of my  
acceptance of the challenge. Bear  
in mind that I did not seek this  
quarrel; it has been fastened on me  
as an additional screw to bid me  
hold my peace; which, with all  
deference, I decline to do. So,  
Mr. Chairman, have at you.

“In a certain county town which  
you, Mr. Chairman, know very well,  
there resided a wealthy butcher,  
—one of the old school, mind you,  
who was not ashamed of his calling,  
but excessively proud of his riches.  
In the common course of events,  
the butcher died, leaving behind  
him an orphan girl under the trust-  
teeship of two individuals, one of  
whom was of *your* profession, Mr.  
Chairman, that is to say, an at-  
torney.” (All eyes were directed  
towards the seat of that functionary,  
whose countenance was sufficiently  
indicative of his distress.) “One  
of these trustees died also, so the  
survivor had it all own way. Some  
speculative notions entered into  
the calculations of that attorney,  
who very dishonestly and cruelly  
squandered the whole of the or-  
phan's patrimony, leaving her to  
seek an asylum in the parish union.  
Some gentlemen have thought pro-  
per to run me very hard, but I can  
tell them one thing, that I, Captain  
L—, designated a swindler, would  
have parted with his life before  
he would have acted so base and  
cowardly a part as to rob a child of  
its inheritance. There,” he con-  
cluded, “take that to your pipe  
and smoke it.” And he resumed  
his seat.

“The huge American, before no-

ticed, strode across the room, took  
L—'s hand in his own monster  
paw, declared he was a trump of a fel-  
low, and he, the American, would  
chaw up any vagabond Britisher who  
dared offend the captain. This  
was a glorious alliance indeed; not  
that L— ever stood in need of  
assistance, for he was a match for  
them all; but he prided himself on  
having won one man from the hos-  
tile throng, by the pure recital of  
facts.

We shall in pity leave the chair-  
man to ruminate upon the recital  
above recorded.

It is the characteristic of all  
Englishmen, to be swayed by any  
appeal to their feelings; and it  
must be stated that all those per-  
sons who had stood aloof from  
Captain L— as being the only  
individual whose antecedents had  
become notoriously public, became  
suspicious of each other, fearing  
that they might fall under the lash  
of this indomitable and sarcastic  
individual. It is quite certain that  
the last *exposé* had such an effect  
upon the auditors generally, that  
one and all abstained from making  
personal remarks, likely to create  
the ire and retaliation of so for-  
midable an enemy. This castiga-  
tion, therefore, had the effect of  
restoring quiet, although there were  
many who quailed under the fear  
of certain exposures, whose indigna-  
tion was felt more keenly from  
the necessity, through policy, for  
their observing silence.

The two friends, Desperate and  
Moss, thought it most prudent not  
to mix themselves up with the  
cabal raised against Captain L—;  
but the latter could not help ob-  
serving that he thought the dead  
set made against the unhappy cap-  
tain was of too pointed a character—  
in fact, it became a persecution; it  
came with a very bad grace from  
many who, according to certain  
records, were not quite so immacu-  
late as they wished to appear.

“Your observations are quite  
correct, Moss,” said the colonel;  
“Captain L— admits his delin-  
quency, so, according to his own  
showing, we can write him down

rogue; but there are many in this place a thousand times worse than he is, only they have had the real good fortune of not being found out. From what you have seen and heard, you will not be surprised to learn that in this very abode have been concocted such gigantic schemes of swindling and recklessness as would astonish the world; and what is still more singular is, that those schemes which turned out satisfactory to the promoters, have been the means of creating colossal fortunes, and making honest men of those who were not very scrupulous in their dealings; and I could point out to you a dozen flourishing establishments in the City of London, the bases of whose fortunes were successful swindles, arranged in this very place, ultimately culminating into substantial houses of honest dealing.

"Hullo! two new comers; let us hear who they are! So following them up to the chairman, the strangers were introduced as Colonel D. and Mr. W. Upon hearing the rank of the first, Moss congratulated his friend upon having a comrade. 'Let us consult my Army List before we decide his rank,' replied Colonel Desperate. He did so, and sure enough there he found another Colonel D., the brother of a baronet, and M.P. for a county S.E. of London. 'It is a well known name,' said Desperate, 'and a very good family to boot, being reputed wealthy, and we have yet to learn how this scion of such a house should find a temporary home in such a place as this. His personal appearance does not savour of military smartness; he looks anything but an officer. I should take him for a well-dressed butcher. However, do not let us judge too harshly of the man from his outward garb. That friend of his, if such he be, approximates very closely to what I should call swell-mobism. See how quickly he accommodates himself to circumstances. Ah! he is known too; he is shaking hands with that little French scamp. Well, perhaps the old adage may apply here, 'birds of a feather,' &c.: you know the remainder."

From the subsequent conduct of these two new individuals, Desperate was not far wrong as to one of them, Mr. W. He was a man of about fifty, with very large whiskers, known as "Piccadilly weepers;" his habiliments were rather flash than fashionable—but his conversation! Whew! he beat them all. Disgusting, filthy, and interspersed with amatory details of the most obscene description, conveyed in language so horrible that even the most abandoned shuddered to hear. To the credit of the knights be it spoken, they one and all refused his companionship.

Desperate directed the attention of his companion to a bulky old man, nicknamed "Daddy," eating his dinner, and remarked—"That man has run through an ample fortune, and is suspected even now to be possessed of money, and our acquaintance, who would not marry the Begum, wormed out of the old fellow the sum of twenty pounds, of which he will never see one shilling. Observe with what gusto he revels in his meal; he is one of the most sensual man I ever met, and withal a dirty, disgusting, niggardly fellow. Just before coming here, he had sold a house to his brother-in-law, and received a portion of the money, and when called upon to execute the necessary conveyance, it was found that the day before, he had sold the same house to another person, and had the whole of the money at that time in his pocket! He is perfectly happy; and says he saves ten shillings per week, which he would have to pay for lodgings—he can have whatever he likes to live upon—he has no one to care for; and that the twelve months he has been here, has been the most comfortable of his existence, and he should be content to live and die in his present quarters. He waits upon himself, and the beast washes up his teacups and plates, and dries them with his pocket-handkerchief."

At this time, a man was observed in an animated discussion with a companion, who was listening with profound attention to the observa-



tions addressed to him. "That man," said Mr. Cook, "distances all others in his career of infamy. In appearance, you might take him to be a Spanish bandit—the restlessness of his coal black eyes—the nervous twitching of a mouth compressed with a horrid determination of purpose, would almost frighten anyone not knowing his character. He is married, and the protector (heaven save the mark!) of a woman who is constant in her attendance upon, and supports him with her purse! The wife and this woman are on the most friendly terms when they meet here; and, while the former sits upon the opposite side of the table, the *cher ami* sidles up to him, and her waist is encircled by his arm! Community here, with a vengeance! He is scarcely ever out of this place, and his dealings are of so questionable a character, that more than once he has been in great jeopardy. But you may rely upon it, that ere long he will meet his deserts.

"I know that man's face somewhere," said Mr. Moss, "who is he?"

"Oh, I see! that short stout man, looking very much like a ticket-porter out of place. Yes; he is an original, a publican by calling, and a very great sinner by reputation. There are several brothers of them, all ex-publicans, and each in turn has been through the Bankruptcy Court, and, to use his own expression, 'has given it them (the creditors) worth their money;' that is, they have gone in for a good swindle. Our present acquaintance, however, is not quite so fortunate, for his attempt to cheat has been met in a rather unexpected manner. Following the footprints in a fraternal manner, he very carefully and legally made over to one of his brothers the whole of his interest, stock in trade and furniture, for money supposed to have been lent over a series of years, as also a promissory-note for four hundred pounds. Well, he did get through his difficulty, with some opposition and trouble, and then applied to his

relation for a reconveyance of the property above referred to. But what was his consternation and indignation when he was informed that he (the brother) meant 'to stick to the lot.' This, as he says, was the most cruel cut of all, for this very brother had made over his lot to him upon a similar occasion and he very honestly gave them up when every thing was 'squared.'

"Of course, there was a loud, angry wrangle between the brothers; and our companion threatened to 'open the ball,' and enforce the restitution of his property. The holder laughed at such a threat; and, the very next morning had our friend arrested upon the bill for £400. He was quick in his movements, and swore that his debtor was about to leave the country, when a *capias* was issued, which lodged him in our company. Now, here is an instance of a double, or, say, a treble swindle, a kind of dog-bite-dog proceeding, which is of such a character as deserves the utmost severity of the law. Our friend is in a fix, he has sworn that the whole of his property was given up to his creditors, so that any stir he makes will recoil on himself. As yet he cannot make up his mind as to the criminality of the matter; but I suppose, as he says, he must 'grin and bear it.'

"What! 'you never heard of such proceedings:' where have been your eyes, then?—not conning the public prints, surely, or you would have read of such things. Perhaps it will enlighten your mind a little, if I inform you that there are thousands of such cases and of daily occurrence. Yes, it is a frightful state of things, but so artfully are these things managed, and so unscrupulous are the professional men employed in such affairs, that there is great difficulty in bringing the matter home so as to ensure punishment.

"Oh, yes; that Frenchman is a despicable character, that is the fellow who beguiled a lady, one of 'gentle blood,' as the stupid phrase is. Remark his frivolous man-

ner—his mountebank, monkey-like attitudes—there is nothing striking in his personal appearance, and however anyone, far less a lady with the prefix of ‘Honourable’ to her name, could be enamoured of such an ape, is beyond my power of comprehension; it was so, however, and she certainly came out pretty strong in the shape of finance. Her amatory epistles were of a startling description, and this scoundrel, from the first, had made up his mind to preserve every line of them, so as to form a stock in trade, if need be. The infatuation of this lady was of the most romantic character. He was a stranger, but he reversed the commentary—he beguiled her, and that, too, at the cost of her reputation, and her love. Of course, he represented himself as one of those persecuted but honourable people, styled political refugees; this alone, in the eyes of the confiding woman, gave her an interest in his case, and, as people say pity is akin to love, we must suppose that the latter preponderated. He related to her, *viva voce*, the unheard-of calamities he had endured for his love of country—how he was proscribed, and hunted down with the most malignant cruelty—how many days and nights he had slept in woods and forests, living on those primitive, but not very nourishing aliments, roots and vegetables—and how he was so reduced by privation, for the want of the common necessities of life, that he had made up his mind to end the fearful struggle against oppressive tyranny and his life together; and, had it not been for a heroic Englishman, belonging to a nation of unbounded liberality and charity, he should have long since slept with his fathers, who all, every man jack of them, had perished upon the scaffold, rather than renounce the dearest wish of their hearts,—the emancipation of their country out of the hands of monsters and vagabonds. Ah! if that had been his fate, he never should have been blessed with the sight and love of his charming Arabella! For her he

would brave a thousand deaths; he should be blessed with that dear little hand and heart, and again restored to all his rank and wealth in his unhappy country; she, the idol of his soul, would be elevated to a position and rank equal to that of an English duchess! All this rhapsodical folly was delivered with such volubility, and upon his knees, that the gentle Arabella sank into his arms—confessed her love—pitied his misfortunes, and promised to be his wife! The artful beggar was in the seventh heaven—he capered about the room like a maniac, embraced the damsel over and over again, and no doubt the poor innocent lady became inspired and grateful for having poured oil and wine into the heart of so good and gallant a man!

“Everybody must confess that our fair friend Arabella committed a grave indiscretion in visiting the lodgings of her *inamorata*, but what will not woman do when inspired by the grand passion? It was quite evident she felt she was doing wrong, for not one of her relations was at all aware of her actions; and this very fact, innocently communicated to this man, gave him a power over her which he exercised with the most scrupulous attention to what such an avowal would and should lead.

“Upon this very occasion the lady was more than generously disposed. Her purse was filled with notes and gold, and when taking a tender leave of her adorer, she delicately left the said purse and contents in his willing hands.

“The door had hardly closed ere his rapacious hand had torn open the purse. He did not care to open it, so anxious was he to get at the contents. But what was his surprise, his bewilderment, when he had carefully and repeatedly counted over the contents, to find himself in possession of two hundred and fifty pounds in span new, crispy Bank of England notes, and shining sovereigns! With silent, awful admiration, he contemplated the wealth before him—then, with



a rush to his desk, concealed it in a secret drawer. He breathed more freely, gazed upon himself in a six-penny looking-glass, and declared that no other man than a Frenchman, and that Frenchman himself, could have achieved so dexterous a move. Why, yes, to be sure, he was good-looking—no doubt of that, but it was his *empressement*, his devotion, which had acted like a talisman upon the tender heart of his dear Arabella. He could not refrain from laughing with a fiendish satisfaction. 'Ah, very goot, very goot, mademoiselle! we shall have some more of that shining metal before we part.'

"They frequently met clandestinely; but our fair lady began to think it not quite right to visit a single gentleman at his lodgings. In her innocence, she told him so; but he laughed it off, and said that ladies in his poor country had no such scruples, and he prayed his dear friend never for one little moment to doubt his honour. This almost reassured her; however, prudence preponderated, and she abstained from committing a like indiscretion.

"'Light come, light go,' is an old saw, but a very true one. Our Frenchman launched out amazingly: and many of his equally unfortunate patriots, as he called them, who slobber, and spit, and smoke their halfpenny cigarettes, and sport their long, dirty, unkempt beards, in that receptacle for foreigners, Leicester Square, could not, for their lives, discover how François became possessed of the means to astonish his friends. It is true he did treat some of them to a little breakfast at times, and upon one occasion, a dinner, but further than this his liberality would not extend. His own gratification was quite another thing; he absented himself from his usual haunts, appeared in clean linen, for a wonder, took wine at his dinner, became extravagant in cigars and tobacco, patronised the theatres and the Italian opera, and—oh! cruel, cruel wretch!—had a tender friend in a secluded part of the town!

"It was certain that £250 could not last long with such extravagance, and so he found it. 'Well,' he said, 'there were as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, and he must angle again.' He did so, and successfully, for dear Arabella could never withstand any solicitations, save one, perhaps, from the lips of François. It would be tedious to repeat how he introduced the subject of money-matters; but he had no scruples, and with the most consummate hypocrisy and impudence he told his idol that her bounty had cheered the hearts of his co-patriots as well as himself, and they, one and all, were only desirous of throwing themselves at her feet, to express their unbounded gratitude.

"The dear little credulous Arabella's eyes glistened to find that she had been the means of alleviating the sufferings of those noble men; her heart beat with philanthropic emotions, and she felt herself a benefactress of her species. Could she do less than continue to afford happiness to the countrymen of her François? No, she could not; the more especially as, one day, it might be her fortunate lot to become a denizen and adornment to the unhappy country awaiting the relief that those generous, disinterested fellows were determined to achieve for it. With such angelic, patriotic feelings did she contemplate the realisation of all their hopes, that another purse, equally well filled, found its way into the greedy grasp of a scoundrel. 'Go,' said the heroic woman; 'go, dearest François, diffuse this trifle among your poor friends, and tell them how keenly I feel their misfortunes, and how I glory in their struggles for freedom.' With a profound obeisance, the rascal thanked the foolish woman in the name of his suffering country; and the little creature left her friend under the conviction that she had ministered to the necessities of deserving men.

"It may be unnecessary to say that not one fraction, not even a

little breakfast, was awarded to his dear friends, but lavished with no sparing hand upon the other tender lady, who luxuriated in the embraces of this French adventurer. And it so happened, very unfortunately for 'poor dear François,' that he was seen by our duped friend Arabella in one of the dress boxes of the theatre, accompanied by a lady the very pink of Parisian fashion, upon whom were lavished the most affectionate attentions by the truant knight. 'Good gracious! what can be the matter with Arabella? Why, child, you are about to swoon! Come, let us away, the heat has overpowered you. Come, come, dear,' and she was led away by her friend.

"Arabella did not faint; her womanly dignity was aroused, and she felt indignant at the insult thus offered her, although François was quite unconscious of his perilous situation. He continued to enjoy himself amazingly, and went home with his tender friend to a *petit souper*.

"The next day he was to have the supreme felicity of meeting his lady love. His exuberant humour gave animation to his rather cadaverous countenance, and he felt a confidence in his own powers of eloquence which few, he thought, could or should withstand. True to the appointment, Arabella met her François. On his part he was officiously civil and polite, but with his usual acuteness he soon discovered a cloud on the horizon. Arabella was very, very circumspect, but did not trespass upon the rules of good breeding. She listened listlessly to the small talk addressed to her, and said but little. She casually, and with apparent indifference, mentioned having been at the theatre; and looking almost through her companion observed his colour change, and a start of surprise seemed to convulse his whole frame. This was, and very justly, construed into guilt; her suspicions were confirmed, and she felt that she must act now or never. Just as she had come to this conclusion, a dirty,

shabby, hirsute Frenchman ran up to the pair, and taking François in his arms, saluted him with that disgusting familiarity so characteristic of the French nation. François was nonplussed and confounded; he tried, but could not shake him off, and with a volubility which baffled all attempts to terminate it, insisted on knowing where his dear friend François had buried himself for the last month. 'Sacre!' hissed François, giving the little fellow a sly shove, and making motions for him to be off. After a few more pantomimic signs, the Frenchman raised his hat to mademoiselle, turned upon his heel, and departed. François breathed more freely.

"Is that one of your patriotic friends?' asked Arabella; 'is that one of the gentlemen who were so anxious to throw themselves at my feet in gratitude?' These questions were asked with that peculiar degree of irony which could not be mistaken. At length he stammered out, 'Yes, he is one of those individuals, poor fellow!' In the distance were seen more of those dirty patriots, at which our friend took the alarm, made an ugly attempt at apology to mademoiselle, and bolted out of sight. Further confirmation of her folly crossed the mind of Arabella, who was about to get into a cab, when the little intrusive Frenchman entreated her to listen to him for a moment. Just what she wished to happen, so she willingly conceded the request. 'Ah! mademoiselle, you don't know François! he is what you will call scamp—runned away from Paris—gendarmes run after—but he get away, come to England, and live by wits.'

"What,' exclaimed Arabella, 'is he not a refugee?'

"Ha, ha!" shouted the little man, 'patriot, *ma foi!* garçon at the Palais Royal!'

"What!" cried the lady, in amazement.

"The little Frenchman repeated his assertion.

"Not a refugee, count, duke, or—?'



"The Frenchman was convulsed with laughter.

"Poor Arabella was confounded. This she thought could never be—a mistake, doubtless. Turning to the little man, she said, 'Where are the noblemen to be found with whom he shared his wealth, his time, his influence?'

"Mademoiselle is deceived; he have no wealth—no patriot friends. His wealth, *sacre!* he be poor as myself. His time—vell, his time he pass with him charming Jeannette, she his supposed wife!"

"Arabella nearly fainted. This was too much; her heart beat quickly; a profuse perspiration diffused itself over her entire frame, and she was constrained to enter a pastrycook's to prevent herself falling in the thoroughfare. After a little time, she recovered her consciousness, and inquired the address of her loquacious companion; who handed her a dirty piece of pasteboard, a pasteboard literally, with his name and address scrawled thereon. She requested him to call a cab, which she entered, leaving in the hands of the man a substantial proof of her liberality; and intimating she would send for him if need be.

"With a thousand salaams, and protestations of profound regard and reverence, he removed his hat with a true Parisian flourish, and vowed eternal devotion to mademoiselle.

"As the cab proceeded, our fair friend reviewed her past conduct. Regret was useless now; she must act, although her heart should break under the trial—she would never submit to be thus duped out of her own self-esteem and money. There was no question but that her beloved François would endeavour to explain all, but her suspicion was aroused, to appease or remove which was a difficulty of some consideration.

"Her anticipations were correct; François addressed a passionate note to his adorable idol—his soul, his existence—craving an interview at the usual trysting-place, the Pantheon.

"Armed with a woman's wrongs, and a disappointed woman's anger, she repaired to the appointed place, and there found the obsequious Frenchman, flushed with the happiness her appearance created. How delighted—how charmed he was at her punctuality—her condescension! How his adoration was increased and fortified by her presence! He took her hand, but the pressure was not returned; her countenance was severe—repelling ('*Diable!*' thought the Frenchman, 'what has turned up?') All attempt at the innocent familiarity she had before permitted was studiously avoided, and François was dumbfounded.

"The lady inquired his reason for wishing her to meet him. Could he believe his senses? Was this the loving woman who had avowed her love, and given him such substantial proof of that love? He was so taken aback that he could not reply, when his dupe herself broke the embarrassing silence, by inquiring after Jeannette. 'Ah!' thought François, 'jealous already, no love without jealousy.' He took courage, replied that his sister Jeannette was well—happy—and that happiness would be increased when he, François, should inform her of mademoiselle's kind inquiries after her health.

"'Sir,' she said; 'this unworthy, shameless artifice will avail you no longer; that woman is your wife, or ought to be; and you, miserable, low-bred scoundrel, are a runaway waiter from the Palais Royal! Now, attempt no further deception upon me. I loathe you and despise myself, for having been betrayed into a communication contaminating alike to rectitude and society.'

"Trembling with astonishment, disappointment, and passion, he attempted an explanation, but she waved him off with the most withering contempt, and continued: 'As to the money you have fraudulently received from me, you are welcome to it; and I consider my experience cheaply purchased by that amount; for I rid myself of a monster in

human shape, but with the heart of a demon; and, as a finale to this miserable delusion into which I have been so artfully, so cruelly led, I now demand of you the return of such letters as I have been weak and foolish enough to address to a French refugee duke!—alias François, the waiter at the Palais Royal.

“Livid with rage, he stammered out something not clearly articulate, but just sufficient to intimate that, although crushed, he was not vanquished; and that revenge was yet in his power, and that he should carry that revenge to the extremity, by blasting the fair fame of this weak, but now determined woman. At length he found utterance, and inquired whether mademoiselle was seriously deranged, or outrageously jealous?”

“The last word aroused her anger, when she said, ‘Jealous of a miserable paltroon!’ She laughed the idea to scorn. Jealousy could only be aroused in woman’s breast when the object of it was worthy a thought; but when in connection with the *canaille* of the world, it was impossible. She continued—‘I repeat, you are welcome to the money you have received, of which the noble refugees, of whom you spoke, have never received one farthing, and I only demand my letters, to finally forget that I was so credulous and foolish, and that such a wretched impostor as yourself ever existed. There, you have my fixed and unalterable resolution.’

“‘Mademoiselle was very cruel,’ he said, ‘but surely she would not, could not cast him into utter despair. Dear Arabella would relent—would—’

“‘Hold, sir!’ she cried; ‘do not dare to address me in such familiar terms; you know what I desire of you, and I command you to restore them to me.’

“‘Was mademoiselle serious?’ he again inquired. Arabella did not make any reply, but her look was quite sufficient to confirm what she had already expressed.

“By this time the Frenchman

had recovered from the thunder-clap, and now busied his brains as to what line of conduct he should pursue. He had been thinking seriously, and had come to the conclusion that his game was up; but the fertility of his genius was enlightened, when he said, ‘mademoiselle was, of course, entitled to her letters, under *certain conditions*; but, as he prized them above all earthly things, he could not part with them; for, by so doing, his heart would be destroyed—broken! Nevertheless, he was grateful to mademoiselle for *her love*, and past favours, and he had no objection that his peace of mind, and his happiness should be wrecked for life—for a consideration!’

“‘Name it,’ was the curt reply.

“‘It was impossible,’ he said, ‘that any consideration he could name would compensate him for the loss of so beautiful, so amiable, so good a lady; but he really thought £1200 was not too much to require for the restoration of those precious documents.’

“‘Incorrigible scoundrel!’ she exclaimed, ‘do you add extortionate impudence to your utter baseness? Think you I will submit to this monstrous outrage of every principle of honesty? Hark you, sir! If I have been weak and foolish, I have seen my error, and deeply, deeply do I regret it. But I would have you remember, I have relations, to whom I must and will reveal my humiliating position; and I have a brother, who will know how to chastise a knave, without compromising his own dignity and honour; and inflict such chastisement upon a villain, who deserves every indignity which one man can inflict upon a scoundrel. Once for all, are you prepared to deliver up my letters, and without conditions?’

“‘Mademoiselle!’ he was going to expostulate, but, reflecting upon the fact that she would appeal to her relations, and that there was such a being in existence as a brother, he very materially altered his tactics, and he therefore said again, ‘If mademoiselle will—’



“Cease your volubility; all I require is, yea or nay, to my demand.”

“I shall say, Nay, till I consider the matter.”

“Very well; you may repent this last piece of villainy;” saying which she stepped into a cab in waiting, and drove away very much disappointed, but with a determination to make a clean breast of it, and obtain the assistance of her relations to extricate her from the perilous position in which she was placed.

“Our hero was outwitted where he thought he held supreme command. It must be seen he had no scruples of conscience; his only aim was money, even at the expense of a confiding woman, albeit a very simple one. No, he would not give up the letters for one shilling less than the sum he had named, and he committed a very grave error in writing to Arabella to that effect. He overreached himself. Having posted this fatal declaration, he waited the result with an impatience bordering on frenzy. The next morning, however, he was delighted to receive an anomalous intimation for him to meet the lady at the old place, bringing the letters with him.

“Ha, ha!” he laughed. “I thought so; she would not be a woman if she did not repent her cruel conduct to the man she loves. It is well; it is indeed the grand passion; but £1200 with my Jeannette is more grand still,” and so he proceeded until he reached the Pantheon.

“In the meanwhile Arabella, true to her purpose and to herself, waived all scrupulous nonsense and unburdened herself to her relations, and with many tears and protestations implored their assistance. Everything was related truthfully; she did not attempt to extenuate her folly; acknowledged everything and threw herself upon the affectionate mercy of her kindred.

“The brother’s ire knew no bounds, he was for horsewhipping the scoundrel from Hyde-park Cor-

ner to Whitechapel, throwing the reptile into any dirty ditch he could find, taking summary vengeance upon the vile impostor who had thus imposed upon his sister’s weakness. All these terrible threats were at once abandoned when the man of law was consulted upon the matter. Nothing could be gained by such a chastisement as was contemplated, but the man of parchment suggested stratagem. ‘Leave the rascal to me; I know how to deal with such crafty vermin.’ It was a part of this stratagem which dictated the letter which so delighted the credulous François.

“He had to wait a few moments for the arrival of Arabella. She appeared alone, but, in fact, she was surrounded by her brother, the lawyer, and a detective, all of whom were unknown to him.

“The lady advanced, apparently self-possessed, carrying her purse, of rather bulky appearance, in her hand. The unsuspecting, unscrupulous François greeted her with a very low bow and a flourish of his hat, and said, ‘Ah! mademoiselle has repented her cruel conduct to her lover, and——’

“‘I have nothing to repent of save only of ever knowing you. You have brought the letters, I hope?’ here she began to open her purse. Yes, he had the letters in the little parcel he had in his hand.

“A little discussion took place; he wanted the money first; she the letters. Neither would give way, when at a preconcerted signal the detective stepped up and confronted the astonished man. His coward lips became white, his teeth chattered, and he trembled in every limb. The lawyer demanded the letters in a peremptory tone, and the detective backed up the demand by declaring who he was, and that in case the documents were not at once given up, why the Frenchman must consider himself in custody and be taken to the police-court. At the same time the officer produced the letter which François was weak enough to write.

“At first he appeared paralysed. He could not comprehend the

whole proceeding, staring from one to the other with bewildered astonishment. At length, recovering a little of his effrontery, he declined to part with what was his own property, and which under the circumstances he meant to make public for the benefit of the innocent class of which he was a deluded victim, and a caution against falling in love with heartless females. The brother was for knocking him down instanter, and would have done so had not the policeman prevented any further demonstration by taking the Frenchman by the arm, and hurrying him off to Marlborough-street, the others bringing up the rear.

"He had not been locked up long before he sent for the officer, and offered the letters for half the sum before required. No, he was told, no compromise would take place; and that his would be the next case before the magistrate. This announcement shook his confidence greatly; his determination wavered, which was quite evident to the officer, who saw the advantage and promptly told him, upon his own authority, that he, the detective, would ask for, and no doubt obtain a five-pound note to pay the Frenchman's cab hire home. This offer was eagerly accepted; and with the money in one hand, he held out the other for the letters; they were handed to him, and the patriot Frenchman pocketed the 'fiver,' as the officer called it.

"You may be sure that all par-

ties, except one, were highly pleased at the result; and poor, chapfallen Arabella vowed she would never encourage any man's attentions without consulting her friends; and as to a Frenchman! good gracious! why she would fly them as she would the plague. Let us hope she kept her word. Her brother was determined to see the last of the affair. François was taken before a magistrate and discharged, no prosecutor appearing. He ordered a cab to be sent for, and just as he was about to step into it, he received such a well-directed kick behind as greatly accelerated his ascent! That indignant kick came from the brother of our fair friend. The Frenchman looked from the cab door with fury in his eyes; muttering many *sacres*, and shaking his fist in the air, he was driven ingloriously from the field as a craven rascal."

Mr. Cook concluded by saying, "You may believe every word of what I have related to you of this little romance, for it came from the man himself, who having been up at court, came back so elevated that he blabbed out everything you have heard. It is rather a long yarn, but it may afford food for reflection upon some occasion, and especially when young ladies, romantically inclined, fall desperately in love with any bearded, moustached foreign upstart, such as this man. Good night! I'm off to bed, rather before the hour, but I am weary and dispirited."



## BIRKHAM WOODS.

BEHIND, the smoke-dimmed throbbing city lay ;  
 In front, broad fields of bearded barley stretched  
 For many a mile, merging in faint blue hills ;  
 To right of us a murmuring river ran ;  
 Rich autumn-tinted woodlands smote our left  
 Above, white clouds sailed o'er a calm blue sky ;  
 Around, the eternal sunshine smiling slept.

The shrieking engine to the silent woods  
 Bore us along, rushing past cottages  
 Buried in apple-trees, where children stood,  
 Cheering the passing train ; and with its din  
 Mingled the merry songs we sang, the jests  
 We cast around us, and the hearty laugh  
 When some loose shaft of wit clung to remark.

What time we came to where the river rolls  
 Majestically underneath the boughs  
 Of willows, and around the ruined tower,  
 We left the train, and passing down a lane  
 On either side of which did madly trail  
 Rich honeysuckles and rare hazel boughs,  
 Soon saw the castle from a little hill  
 Upleaping through the trees, which round it clung  
 Like sweet thoughts wreathing world-worn, weary hearts.

We rambled all the golden afternoon  
 Around the castle and among the trees,  
 Oft resting when we reached some flowery glen  
 Which modern poets love to rhyme about,  
 Saying they love such. (Yes, at eventide,  
 And with a fair face nestling to their own.)  
 When one with liberal hand would scatter round  
 Faster than we could gather them, the tales  
 Of Love and Duty, Faith and noble worth,  
 Which glorify the ruins like the clouds  
 That hang i' the west when the red sun goes down.  
 And passing on, we often met the rest  
 In little scattered parties—twos and fours—  
 Whereat we stayed awhile to hear them tell  
 Of some rare sight : a blossom-scented glen—  
 A tumbling waterfall—a hidden lake—  
 A crumbling tower, or a darksome cave—  
 The path to which being pointed, on we went.

When Evening, crownèd with a full-orbed moon,  
 Came through the harvest-fields, where reapers reaped,  
 And gleaners gleaned, and everything seemed glad,  
 We met again beneath the castle-walls.  
 In the cool shadow of the great oak-trees,  
 We sat among the grass, and talked and sang,

Some listening with closed eyes. The olden times  
 Came back with all their splendour, and around  
 Were knights all armour-clad, and prancing steeds,  
 And monks and minstrels in the castle-court,  
 And maidens seated in a flowery bower  
 Singing a merry roundelay ; so sweet  
 Was that old song they sang of country life,  
 And idle ease, and all-enriching mirth.

Then one fair modern wood-nymph, with a smile  
 That rippled through the silence like a stream  
 In summer time all through the leafy woods,  
 Turning to one—a would-be poet—said :  
 “ You wrote a song when you were here one day  
 Last summer. Will you let us hear the song ? ”  
 With many a plea for all its modern faults,  
 He read to us a song called BIRKHAM WOODS.

“ In Birkham Woods through all the summer day  
     Streams flow musically.  
 Lingering blossom-laden breezes play  
 Among the bending boughs strange shapes fantastically  
 Creep round the shades which rest in Birkham Woods.

Visions of beauty only poets see—  
     Sights rare and splendid :  
 Knight and fair lady at the trysting-tree,  
 Nymphs at the haunted well, when the long day's ended,  
 And the sweet stars shine over Birkham Woods.

But let the old days pass without a tear—  
     Pass on for ever !  
 Blossom, O summer beauty of the year !  
 Fill the world full of gladness ! pain and want shall never  
 Linger around the shades of Birkham Woods.

While Lucy lives Belphebe cannot die !  
     Sing, happy maiden—  
 O gladly sing beneath a cloudless sky !  
 Beneath outspreading boughs with trembling blossoms laden !  
 Sing, happy nymph, and haunt rare Birkham Woods.  
 O merry singer, sing—and smile the while—  
     In charmed numbers !  
 The song seems like the wave-voice round an isle  
 Resting in southern seas, what time the glad world slumbers,  
 Sing through the golden calm of Birkham Woods !

The red sun sinks, flushed are the western skies  
     With rosy glory ;  
 Glimmers between the leaves a sweet sunrise ;  
 Tremble the happy stars, telling their wondrous story  
 Farewell, O mellow shades of Birkham Woods ! ”



Ended the song, we clapped our hands in praise,  
Thanking the reader for his courteous verse,  
And his fair meaning. Quickly veering round,  
Straightway we all began to banter him:—  
“You modern writers,” one said, “are too vain  
For common people’s fancy: how you praise!  
And wherefore? not because you love the thing.  
You ever praise—a pardonable fault—  
But rather, praise being your desired reward,  
You think to gain praise by praise; you are fain  
To act the flatterer, as some return  
For all the ill-spent praise we waste on you.”  
And then another, chiming in, went on:  
“Come, friends, let us be wise, and bring not fame  
And lay it at their doors with many a smile,  
Entreating them to grant it entrance there;  
But, rather, by our just and honest doubt,  
Let us upbuild a wall ’tween them and fame,  
Which only eager hearts will e’er o’erleap.”

Now the fair harvest-moon shone o’er the sheaves,  
And through the trees, across the leafy moat.  
Arm-linked we left the shades of Birkham Woods,  
Passed through the harvest fields, and to the train;  
Then, whirling through the woodlands, soon we stood.  
Where the great human waves for ever flow,  
Now light, now dark, to the eternal sea.

H.

## PER ASPERA AD ASTRA :

A TALE OF LOVE, WAR, AND ADVENTURE.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE RIVAL LOVER AND HIS SCHEMES.

SOME few days after Staelburg's departure from Germany, Hardfels, who had never felt altogether at ease as to the justice of the course he had taken, determined to consult his worthy chaplain, Father Clement. However tenacious the Church of Rome may, in general, be of her claims upon the consciences of her sons,—either from a fear to offend her members and drive them to schism, or probably from the aversion manifested by individual priests to intrude upon the secrets of the laity, the confessional was not very strictly enforced. Father Clement was not so arrogant as to insist on being the confidant of the Baron's state mysteries; and it was not until solicited, that he gave his advice upon subjects. Accordingly, the two might be seen in close conversation, pacing the spacious pleasure-grounds which adjoined the castle. The Baron of Hardfels began to open his mind to the good ecclesiastic, by observing that the absence of Staelburg might not have escaped his observation.

"I have, indeed, noticed that the visits of the young Count seemed to afford you but little satisfaction; and I have since understood that he has left this part of the country. If such be a voluntary act on his part, I think it may relieve your mind of much anxiety."

"Your information is correct: the young man has taken leave of us. I regret I cannot say his absence is altogether the suggestion of his own mind. You must be aware of the circumstances which brought him so frequently here. I certainly should have no objection

to his paying his addresses to my daughter, were it not that I have made a binding promise to the Baron of Würmer, that no exertions should be wanting on my part to promote a union between Bertha and himself. It is, indeed, most true, that no comparison can exist between the two lovers in point of good qualities. I admire the candour and ingenuousness of the one, as much as I detest the sinister designs and perfidious habits of the other. Nevertheless, having given my word to favour the suit of Würmer, I conceived that I should in no manner be acting up to that word, were I to suffer the Count of Staelburg to continue a visitor at my castle. Under this conviction, and fearing that in the then aspect of affairs the noble youth would fall a victim to the violent animosity of his rival, I had recourse to harsh, yet, I trust, salutary measures. To be frank, I have obtained a warrant for his banishment from the Margrave. You may think my plans rather over-hasty, on hearing that it was but very recently that I put my decided veto upon his addresses; but I had, up to that time, hoped that I might have prevailed upon Würmer to release me from my engagement. He was obdurate, and I was compelled to act as I have done."

"I trust, nevertheless, you pondered well ere you decided on a course which you rightly term harsh. Remember that evil should not be done that good may arise."

"I assure you," said the layman, "that it was not without due consideration that I acted as I have. I think, from your knowledge of



Würmer's character, you will agree with me, that those who become his enemies seldom live long,—either they are found murdered by banditti, or apoplexy carries them off; or perhaps they are withdrawn from our sight without any clue being ascertained which may account for their disappearance. In short, I fear Staelburg's life would not be worth many days' purchase, exposed to the malice of the malignant noble."

"Since you profess so just an abhorrence of the vices of this Würmer, permit me to ask, Is it not somewhat strange that you should select him for your son-in-law?"

"I do not wonder at your remark, holy father. I bitterly regret the necessity of my present course of conduct. My word is passed, and cannot be broken; besides, political views, in a great measure, prompt me."

"Did not Herod, for his word's sake, shed innocent blood, committing a greater sin to avoid a less? and is not your case in all respects the counterpart of his? Would it not be better for you to break this rash promise to Würmer, and restore happiness to two fond hearts, than, by an over-scrupulous regard for honour, to doom your noble-minded daughter to the misery and degradation of becoming the bride of so unprincipled a man?"

A deep sigh escaped almost involuntarily from Hardfels, as he replied, with an air of ill-assumed indifference: "I said not that the promise I gave was the result of rashness. I saw before me, and regret to say, I still see, so great a number of dangers, that I think no other system than the one I have chosen could extricate me, and, indeed, all who are dear to me, from them."

The good priest's brow was oppressed by an appearance of deep melancholy, as he answered: "You are prepared, then, to avert evil by the sacrifice of your daughter. Abraham's faith was counted unto him for righteousness; but his intended offering was founded upon

sufficient motives. Yours, I fear, has no such justification, and resembles more the bloody sacrifices to Moloch. The emergency must be great which could call for such a course. My advice to you is, incur any amount of danger rather than consign the idol of your heart to a fate in comparison to which death itself were happiness. You are not of so weak a frame of mind as to anticipate evil from the vain threats of Würmer?"

"In the absence of any alternative, I must pursue the unhappy bent of my destiny. Bitter, indeed, is my disappointment to find myself no better than the tool of this man, who has succeeded in overreaching me by his diabolical intrigues and schemes. My mind revolts at even holding the everyday intercourse of life with him. Imagine, therefore, my feelings on being compelled to accept him as the husband of my only daughter. Pity an unfortunate parent!"

Father Clement, having compassion on the deplorable condition of the unhappy Baron, forbore to intrude further on his confidence. But the latter, appreciating his delicacy, continued: "I observe, my worthy friend, that you would fain relieve my mind of anxiety by becoming the consoler of my sorrows, if you only knew their magnitude; but I fear I can never reveal to any human being the full extent of the fearful influence which Würmer possesses, and does not fail to exercise, over me, much more the means by which such influence is derived. You will think it strange that one so well versed in diplomacy as I am supposed to be, should be defeated by the superior *finesse* of Würmer. I trust I should never avail myself of the means he so unscrupulously practises, either to increase my political or private connexion; but, tied as I am by regard to integrity, I acknowledge myself no match for this scheming plotter."

"I can respect your motives; and I have no doubt that, should the sequel of this lamentable affair be ever brought to light, your con-

duct and principles would acquire additional renown from the disclosure. Be prudent, therefore; 'tarry thou the Lord's leisure; act always with regard for justice and truth; and doubt not that, at some future time, Providence will bless your exertions in the cause of the right."

"Amen! amen!" exclaimed the Baron fervently. "Right heartily do I wish that any sacrifice on my part would avert the impending ill from my darling Bertha; but any misfortune which might befall me would involve us all in one common destruction. I have, therefore, after much reflection, and with most unfeigned sorrow, resolved to make a surrender of one—the best-beloved one—in order to save the rest. Solomon said well, 'The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.' You, my trusty adviser, are certainly anything but a stranger to me, but your sacred calling exempts you from being afflicted with the trials which now encompass me; and your mind, kind and affectionate though I know it to be, can in no measure understand the bitterness of my spirit. The deep waters of affliction are, indeed, come over my soul."

"Take courage," said the benevolent priest. "I have no wish to act the part of the stranger by intermeddling with my joy; but permit me to say, 'I have been young, and now am old, yet never saw I the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.'"

Here their subject was interrupted by the appearance of Karl, who respectfully announced to Hardfels that the Baron of Würmer was waiting the honour of a private interview with him. Subduing every appearance of his late excitement, the Baron of Hardfels once more assumed the character of the polished courtier, for which his admirable self-control well qualified him. On entering the apartment where his visitor was expecting him, the Baron greeted him with calm yet haughty courtesy.

With a curtness of manner the reverse of pleasant to Hardfels, Würmer said, in a tone of some arrogance: "I have merely intruded upon you to ascertain if you had made any preparations for the fulfilment of your promise to me. As I understand my courtly rival was here a few days since, I thought it not unlikely that all recollection of your engagements to me had escaped your mind."

"Have you ever yet found me fail in any of my engagements?" said Hardfels, with much gravity. "Have I not used all possible means to promote your suit? You are certainly in possession of my word, which is indeed most sacred to me; but I consider your present tone and bearing presumptuous."

Well versed though a person may be in effrontery and arrogance, it is seldom that calm dignity fails to cower and subdue him. It was thus with Würmer. Little used to courteous conduct, when the object of such a procedure was gained, he could not but adopt a more polite behaviour in the presence of one who, however his inferior in some things, far outshone him in grace and refinement. In somewhat piteous accents, he exclaimed:—

"Pardon me! If my feelings have carried me too far, let my earnest love for your daughter plead for me. [A cold shudder came over the elder noble, as Würmer spoke of affection for the high-souled Bertha.] I had understood that Staelburg was very recently here; and the jealousy of my passion suggested motives for his visit, and even encouragement on your part."

"Suffer me to inquire by what means you became aware of the young Count's visit. I thought I had put an effectual stop to the system of espionage practised here."

Würmer was seldom at a loss for a lie to conceal his real designs; but, on this occasion, even this useful art failed him; and he remained speechless for some time in the presence of his interrogator, who continued:—



"Since you do not seem inclined to answer my question, I put my own construction on your silence. I suppose the fact is that one of your creatures has been employed to lurk about my residence, and convey to you accurate intelligence of all that passes therein. Is it not so? You are, of course, aware of the causes which led to the dismissal of my page Michael?"

Würmer, for once detected by a person whose common sense he considered so far beneath his own, fearing that nothing but an assumption of candour could suit his purpose, said, with an ingenuous air:—

"I cannot but think you have put a very unfavourable interpretation upon my motives in acting as I have. I certainly did give the youth you mention a slight gratuity to guard my interests generally. It seems that, with an over-officious zeal, this Michael took upon himself to become a spy; but what reliance can be placed upon the word of so abandoned a wretch as he appears to be, especially when you have my word in express contradiction to his?"

An expression of contempt was visible in every feature of the Baron of Hardfels' classic countenance, on Würmer's allusion to his word.

"I regret to hear you deny a fact which I should have thought it would have suited your interests, as well as your honour, to have admitted. As I have an admission of the means practised in one case, I will make no further inquiries into the other."

"Your remarks are severe—in fact, more so than the circumstances of the case warrant. What will not love, on the one hand, and hate on the other, urge us to perform? However, excuse my remarking that reproaches such as these I did not expect, and will not tolerate. You know the extent of my power: thwart me, and your doom is sealed. I did not come here to be trifled with."

"I am well aware of the hold you have on me, and am almost

tempted to prepare for the worst, rather than continue in the horrible agony of mind in which your proposals place me."

"Never mind! never mind!" said Würmer, impetuously, a malignant grin betraying the satisfaction he experienced from Hardfels' admission. "We waste time. The object of my visit was rather to ascertain what preparations you had made for the union of your daughter and myself, than to indulge in these recriminations."

"Hear me!" said Hardfels. "In pursuance of my engagement to you, I have effectually disposed of the young Count of Staelburg; so that you need not, in future, fear any opposition from him. You will now have every opportunity of obtaining Bertha's consent, without which, you will remember, the whole arrangement entered into between us falls to the ground."

A dark scowl lowered on Würmer's features as he heard these words; but, suppressing all appearance of disappointment, he answered: "You have so far done well; but I suppose no steps have been taken to prevent a repetition of the annoyance I have been subjected to by this haughty Staelburg and your own malapert son. Without doubt, when the affairs of the state require your attendance at court, the two lovers will carry on their amorous intercourse behind your back."

"I have guarded against any such contingency by procuring a warrant for his banishment from the Margrave; and I have given strict orders that no correspondence shall be held with him during his absence. He informed me it was his intention to quit Germany forthwith; and I believe he has carried his resolution into effect. Are you now satisfied?"

"You have acted, indeed, honourably in this respect. But I suppose my gay rival has betaken himself to some locality whence it will be easy for him to pay a visit to Kielsworth during your absence?"

"I neither know nor care to know aught of his intentions. It

is not my practice to employ spies to watch over other's movements, as, it seems, is the custom of some."

Würmer winced at this last taunt; but, with an expression of diabolical malignity, he added: "You ask me if I am satisfied of your sincerity. I require but one more proof. If I am unable to effect any impression on your fair daughter's mind in the space of three months, let her be sent as a novice to the Convent of our Lady at Mentz, where, should she still continue perverse, let her take the black veil, and spend the remainder of her days in seclusion. This is my only demand, and, you must confess, it is lenient enough."

The effect of this last speech exceeded even Würmer's most sanguine anticipation. The remembrance of Hardfels' sarcasm was entirely effaced by this moment of triumph. He had now the fiendish pleasure of inflicting the most refined torments on the proud, though stern, parent; and his implacable spirit rejoiced in the misery he was creating. The calm and philosophical Hardfels was excited almost to desperation by the unfeeling suggestion he had heard. His limbs trembled, and his tongue almost refused to give vent to the working of his mind. Remembering, however, the gratification which the sight of his anguish would afford Würmer, he added, with as much composure as he could assume:

"I cannot acknowledge the leniency of your demands. But as I am no longer a free agent, however my heart may be racked with the emotions which a father must feel, I promise you that, if within six months you fail in persuading my daughter to become your bride, I will act as you have proposed. You are at liberty at any time to come as a wooer within my walls; and I cannot but hope that an obedient consent on her part to your overtures will spare me the necessity of enforcing them in the manner you suggest. I presume it to be your wish to see my daughter now?"

"No, Baron of Hardfels; it is

never my intention to become a woman's slave. I leave the whole management of this delicate affair in your hands; and should you fail in bringing about my designs by fair persuasion, do not imagine I shall remit you the performance of your last undertaking. I grant you the six months; but at its expiration, expect no mercy from me."

Your last speech is greatly at variance with your plea of love as an excuse for your unmanly conduct. I have no alternative but submission; and whatever conduct you may practise, you will find me at all times prepared to redeem my word."

"Be it so, then. I have performed my task," said Würmer, as, extending his hand with a bad grace to his intended father-in-law, he prepared to depart. To his intense chagrin, Hardfels refused to accept it, saying, with becoming dignity, that a person who could use such language as that he had just heard was unworthy of the hand of a gentleman.

Exclaiming, in a tone far from gentle, that no opposition to his will should be passed over with impunity, Würmer left the apartment.

Having left Hardfels Castle, the worthy Würmer rode along at an easy pace, trusting to meet his sworn ally, Ruffo, and ascertain what progress that business-like individual was making for the completion of his designs on his enemies. Since the events previously mentioned, Ruffo had thought it best to court retirement, lest a revelation of the misfortune which had befallen him should call forth more indignation than sympathy from his benevolent employer. Being unable to meet with his able coadjutor, Würmer gave himself up to a train of thought, which might be resolved into nearly the following words:

"Fortune favours the brave. I have played a deep game, with much success. So that old dolt, Hardfels, thought to oppose his will to mine: let him look to himself. Those who make an enemy



of me have good cause to rue the deed. Deny me his hand, indeed! deeply shall he regret having offered such an insult to one so fully capable of resenting it. I have obtained his promise, that in six months' time she shall be an inmate of my mansion or a convent. I did not go to Mentz to see my good aunt Ursula, the Lady Abbess of the Nunnery there for nothing. Once under her clutches, I am almost tempted to pity the unfortunate novice; but no, she has despised me—let her meet the fate she has provoked. My path, then, is clear; everything favours my bold projects. Bertha become sister Cecilia at Mentz, her goods become the property of holy Mother Church, nothing thwarts me but this hot-headed boy, who dared overcome me in the contest. He must die, no matter how; and the convent of our Lady at Mentz succeeds to all the vast property of the old Baron after his death. My revered kinswoman will infringe the Bull 'In Cœnâ Domini,' so far as to bestow a considerable portion of the spoil upon the person to whom she owes the whole; and then my ambition has reached its goal. Hardfels, deprived of both his children, cannot long survive; and thus shall I have gratified every desire of my heart. I shall have ruined the proudest peer in Germany; deprived him of the objects of his fondest affection; possessed myself of his estates; and who will, after that, say my vengeance for occasional slights, and at last studied insults, has not been full and complete? Then remains but Staelburg to dispose of; and he is likely, certainly, to become a dangerous rival to me. I had hoped that I should have obtained from Hardfels some hint as to his movements; but the old fellow either does not, or fains not to know, anything of him. Nevertheless, by perseverance, no doubt, I shall find some clue to his whereabouts which may enable me to confer an essential obligation upon him. If I could but find that able rascal Ruffo, I could soon ascertain what

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probability there might be for his becoming the instrument of my vengeance. What folly, on his part, to suffer him to elude his fate! I wonder how he fared with that fellow, Albert? What comparison, after all, can the boasted pleasures derivable from the maintenance of probity bear to the delightful satisfaction of possessing so overwhelming a power over the lives and fortunes of our fellow-creatures? By whatever means this influence may be obtained, sweet is it, and amply does it repay its fortunate owner for the scorn with which those who pride themselves on greater rectitude of conduct treat him. Philip of Macedon, or whoever he may be, was not far wrong in saying that he would rather be feared than loved. I fully concur in the justice of his remarks, and intend acting up to it. What a farce! for Conrad Würmer to assume the appearance of a lover, to work woe both on father, daughter, and all his foes!"

We think, however, we have quite disgusted our readers with this portrait of triumphant vice; and we will, by their concurrence, once more direct their attention to the career of him for whose undeviating rectitude Würmer conceived such supreme contempt.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### MARTIAL PREPARATIONS.

At an early hour, Staelburg and Hofman quitted their domiciles, and made their appearance at the breakfast-table of their worthy entertainer. We will not enter upon a critical discussion of the several viands which the generosity of Mynheer Naarveldt had prepared for his guests. Having completed breakfast, their host intimated to Staelburg and Hofman his readiness to perform his promise of the previous evening. The medical practitioner at first seemed inclined to defer his introduction, but, altering his intention, thankfully accepted the offer. A few minutes' walk brought the citizen and his protégés to the building

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fitted up as the head-quarters of William of Orange and his brethren in arms. No external pomp served to indicate the abode of so distinguished a man; and poor Hofman could be scarcely persuaded that the taciturn Dutchman had not been practising some deception upon him by way of retaliation for his introductory address. A flight of massive stone steps led from the street to the door, at which was stationed an individual probably intended to officiate in the capacity of valet, but who, from the martial appearance of his garb and features, might have seen service in a less peaceful occupation. Mynheer Naarveldt was no stranger to the janitor, who, without loss of time, informed the renowned Prince of his presence.

In an apartment whose furniture bore no token of luxury, a tall, erect personage, of about the middle age, was seated, deeply engaged in the completion of a plan of some fortifications. The Prince of Orange was of a complexion once fair, although now embrowned by the effects of exposure to the elements and honest exertions in the service of his country. His hair was of a rich, glossy chesnut; and in his full, firm eye, vigour and resolution were combined in no ordinary degree. His dress, which was worn with no regard to effect, was simple and tasteful; and his every action betokened the gentleman and the soldier. So intent was the Prince at his occupation, that he was, for a moment, unaware of the presence of Mynheer Naarveldt and his protégés. Courteously rising from his seat, he apologised for his absence of mind, and, having been introduced in due form to Brieswald (as we must now call our hero) and Hofman, desired them to be seated. In a clear, rich voice, he inquired of the worthy citizen in what way he could have the pleasure of serving either himself or friends? After a few preliminary remarks from Naarveldt, Brieswald briefly informed the Prince that he had left Germany in the hope that his small talents might be employed

for the benefit of a people with whom he had so much sympathy, and confessed a great desire to perfect himself in the science of arms under so distinguished a general as the Prince of Orange.

"Brieswald?" said the Prince after musing for a little while, "I recollect none of that name. From what part of Germany do you come?"

"From the Margravate of Baden-Baden, your highness," answered the young soldier. "But as I have hitherto lived in seclusion, it is not unlikely so humble a name as that I bear never reached your ears."

Forming a shrewd conjecture of the real facts of the case, the Prince added, with a bland smile: "I have no doubt that the fame you will acquire in the present campaign will amply atone for your late seclusion." Then turning to Hofman, who had hitherto been making a series of salaams which would have done honour to any Parisian *petit maître*, "In what manner, good sir, may I promote your interests?"

"With an air of considerable gravity, the person so addressed commenced: "Most mighty and world-renowned Prince, I am none other than an unworthy son of Æsculapius, by name Hofman, who having studied at the University of Tübingen, am come to offer my services to any of your good soldiers who may meet with wounds or disease. I regret that circumstances exist which will render my stay here but short; during that time, however, your highness may rely on my assistance to the best of my power."

"I am glad to see you. As you may have need to traverse the country, here is a warrant of safe conduct, which every follower of the Orange banner will respect. You say your name is Hofman? Methinks I have seen you before at Vienna."

"Your highness has never seen Frederick Hofman before, or I am greatly mistaken," was the curt reply of the surgeon.

"Perhaps not," said William of



Orange, eyeing him with a penetrating glance. "As for you, my young friend," continued he, turning to our hero, "unless you prefer any other arrangement, I shall consider you as forming a member of my body-guard."

Here the aforesaid valet announced that Count Battenburg, an officer of experience and valour, who had displayed much devotion to the Prince and his fortunes, and Peter Van der Werf, the burgo-master of the town, awaited an audience. Whereupon the Prince, observing that the society of brave men must be of mutual advantage, desired them to be instantly admitted.

William received Battenburg with the esteem and cordiality which his good services deserved. Van der Werf had figured more in a private capacity, and nothing but dire necessity would have aroused him to become a distinguished actor in the startling scenes of the times; but although his abilities were of a quiet nature, and his character modest and retiring, none could possess greater patriotism, or more undaunted courage, either of an active or passive nature, than the exemplary burgo-master. The Prince of Orange was not of a nature to be captivated with outward show, and his intelligent and mind soon discerned the merits of this brave and good man, simple though his manners, and humble his garb, might be. Thinking that the society of himself and Hofman might be an intrusion on the debates of the others, Breiswald and his companion withdrew, after having taken a respectful leave of the Prince. Naarveldt remained to assist in the deliberations of the little council. Although, perhaps, not quite so large as at present, Leyden was, at the time we speak of, a town of much consequence, and of considerable architectural beauty; and its trade, previous to the insurrection, had been extensive. Breiswald's eye traversed with admiration the various buildings which decorated the Broad Street,—a

street considered by many one of the finest in the world, and the beauty of which was greatly enhanced by the scrupulous regard for cleanliness which so eminently distinguishes our Dutch neighbours. His attention, however, was quickly directed to the numerous groups of citizens who were congregated to discuss the momentous topics of the day, and to make preparations for the future. Approaching one of the little parties, he found an elderly man respectably attired, lecturing his auditors on the heinousness of the conduct of the Spaniards, whom he demonstrated, to the perfect satisfaction of his hearers, to be none other than the Antichrist of the Apocalypse. In another quarter, a young man, of fanatical appearance, was addressing those of his own views on the text, "Through much tribulation shall ye enter the kingdom," which, it is very probable, the preacher, in the warmth of his temperament, really imagined to be the establishment of their own liberties,—at least, the earnestness with which he exhorted his flock to "fight the good fight of faith," in which they were engaged, rather justified any such idea. The next knot he encountered was composed of men of a higher rank in society, who were listening with much interest to an harangue delivered by a citizen of good address, on the perfidy of the Queen of England, in not taking a more active part on their behalf. They had, he said, despatched, as an envoy, a man possessing the eloquence of a Boanerges to induce her to espouse their cause; but he feared that all the energy of the patriotic Janus Dousa would fail in rousing that over-politic princess to action. Much as our hero felt disposed to fraternise with this last assembly, he easily ascertained, from the suspicious glances with which he was regarded, that his society was considered no improvement. He therefore continued his stroll, until he was beset by a worthy armourer from Liege, who took advantage of the state of

things at Leyden to dispose of a little of his hardware. With the utmost volubility this son of Vulcan discanted on the various good qualities of the weapons he offered for sale : if only half of which were true, the gorgets and hauberks he vended would render the fortunate wearer considerably more invulnerable than Achilles. On Brieswald's equipments he, of course, bestowed remarks anything but complimentary ; and not all the assurances that the young adventurer could give him, that every article he wore was of the best Milan manufacture, could convince the armourer of the superiority of such articles over his own. To ease himself of his importunities, Brieswald purchased a dagger of highly tempered steel, of which the sheath was elaborately ornamented, intending it as a present for his generous entertainer. Having, by these means, procured a little rest, he continued his progress, until he found himself in the midst of a band of well-armed gentlemen, many of whom spoke high German. Being recognised as a compatriot, he met with a courteous reception. He was much pleased to find in his acquaintances his future associates in the body-guard of the Prince. Although the ritters of the guard attempted to put the best construction possible on the aspect of affairs, it could not be denied that their position was one of great peril. Notwithstanding their cause was certainly one of right against might, yet it was might of no ordinary nature with which they had to contend. The Spanish troops, their adversaries, had hitherto passed for the finest in Europe. The renowned cavalry of Spain, matchless in arms and discipline, and her sturdy infantry also, had shown their valour on many a hard-fought field, and, officered by brave and experienced commanders, formed no mean opponents. What, indeed, had the Dutch general to oppose to these famous warriors ? With the exception of his German auxiliaries, his troops were chiefly raw

levies. However well versed in martial habits the leader might be, he had but few officers in his camp from whom much could be expected. Notwithstanding the general execration of the tyranny of the Spanish yoke, on minor matters there was but very little unity among the Patriots. Protestants viewed Romanists with suspicion, while demagogues excited the people to a fanatical hatred of their aristocratic leaders ; and it required the whole of the exertions of the politic Prince to prevent the differences springing up into open variance. Wholesome emulation is at all times productive of benefit ; but jealousy and ill-will are mischievous intruders on subjects upon which all should be harmony. The brutal conduct of their enemies, however, prevented any retrograde conduct upon the part of those who had once taken up arms on behalf of their country. In fact, such had been the studied contempt for honour and the laws of war displayed by the invader, that each (whatever his opinions on other things might be) was firmly resolved to undergo any possible amount of privations rather than trust to the mercy of the Spaniards ; for well they knew that a repetition of the brutal massacre perpetrated at Rotterdam would arise in every place which opened its gates to the enemy.

This last topic underwent considerable discussion on the part of the gentlemen of the guard ; and many were the fierce invectives launched upon those who could conceal their murderous purposes under the treacherous pretext of making a harmless passage through an unsuspecting town. One house alone escaped the fury of the incensed soldiery, by the ingenious stratagem of spilling the blood of cats about the threshold and door ; so that those who thirsted for the blood of the inmates passed on, in the full belief that others had forestalled them in the work of slaughter. Conduct such as this, of course, put an end to all thoughts of capitulation or submission ; and



the determination of both foreigners and Low-Country men in the guard was, to sell their lives as dearly as possible, in preference to paying any heed to the bland proposals of their foes.

Here and there a haughty member of the Gueux, as the aristocratic instigators of the scheme were formerly called, passed you on his way to the council-chamber. A desire for revenge rankled deep in these men's minds, on account of the ignominious death which was carried into effect on two of their order, the Counts Egmont and Horne—nobles of patriotic nature and kindly disposition, who had vainly striven to bring Philip of Spain to reason, and save the effusion of blood, which they foresaw would result from his obstinate bigotry. From the number of men of distinction who thronged the streets, the ritters of the guard augured that a project of some consequence was under discussion; and they were not far wrong in their surmises.

Perceiving his good friend Naarveldt at no great distance, the young Count quitted his brethren in arms, and joined him. He ascertained, with some little astonishment, that the volatile Hofman had, at the risk of falling in with the Spaniards (who were at that time commencing a blockade of Haarlem,) resolved to proceed thither to acquire what information he could of the state of affairs there. Mynheer Naarveldt, being a man of early habits, proposed to Breiswald to partake of dinner with him, and would not hear of any

excuse. Their party included a soldier named De Wenke, who seemed to regard the buxom daughter of their entertainer with a very affectionate eye. At the conclusion of their frugal repast, all gathered round the ample fire, and enjoyed the good schnaps which Naarveldt had broached in honour of his guests. De Wenke had a very good idea of war, and made many remarks on the prospects of the Patriots, which much prepossessed our hero in his favour. Naarveldt's views were, that their leader—against whom the experienced Duke of Alva, hitherto considered almost invincible, had made but little progress—would maintain the independence of the revolted provinces until adequate assistance should arrive from England or the German Empire. De Wenke felt much alarmed for the safety of Alftrude, on hearing Naarveldt's opinion that ere long the Spaniards would doubtlessly attack Leyden, especially should they succeed in reducing Haarlem, and that, unless material additions were made to the strength of the latter place, its capture might probably ensue.

The good Naarveldt accepted Breiswald's present with every token of gratitude, and vowed that, if his life were preserved, the dagger should drink deep of Spanish blood at every opportunity. At his earnest request our young hero consented to take up his quarters at his hospitable abode until the call of honour should summon him from Leyden.

## USE AND ABUSE OF COLOUR IN DRESS.

Of the two attributes of ornamental art, namely, colour and form, colour has always been the more attractive, especially to the uneducated eye. An appreciation of the beauty of form is generally the effect of cultivation; but the love of colour is innate. There are few eyes possessed of the blessing of sight which are not affected by it, more or less. This is true of animals, as well as of men. The effect of red upon the bovine race is well known. In Spanish bull fights, the agile *matador* rouses the courage of his four-footed opponent by waving before his eyes a red scarf or flag. The terror shown by wild beasts at the presence of fire—the traveller's protection—has been ascribed to the sight of the ruddy glare of the flames. In infants, one of the first acts of consciousness is the recognition of artificial light when concentrated, as in the flame of a candle, and contrasted with surrounding gloom; or of bright colours displayed before the eye. Grown older, the child loves coloured toys and coloured pictures, and generally prefers the more gaudy colours, such as red and yellow, to the sober ones. The South Sea Islander robes himself in a mantle of feathers, gay with all the colours of the rainbow. To many races a string of coloured beads is a coveted decoration. The American Indian is terrible in his war-paint; with glaring contrasts of red and yellow, black and white, he thinks to add to the deadly effect of his arms. Who can say whether the blue pigment with which the ancient Briton dyed the exposed parts of his body may not have been applied with similar intentions?

Among some nations colour was significant of rank and condition. The Romans permitted none but those of the highest rank to wear the Tyrian purple; and the pigment vermilion was reserved for

the statues of the gods. With the Mahomedans, a green turban denotes a descendant of Ali, the kinsman of the prophet. In the Romish Church the Cardinals wear scarlet; and in our own country may be seen the servants of the Bishops clothed in regal purple. The religious societies, renouncing the pomps and vanities of the world, clothe themselves in quiet grey and brown, black and white. Colours are the outward and visible signs of mourning. The European mourns in black; the Chinese in white; the Egyptians in yellow; the Turks in blue or violet. Colours also have emblematical significations; but into these I cannot now enter.

In tropical countries, where the birds and insects are brilliantly coloured, the inhabitants have a peculiar delight in decorating their persons with bright colours. If we examine relics of art, not only of early date, but those of the best period—the era of Raphael, for instance—we find draperies of the primitive (red, blue, yellow,) or secondary (green, orange, and purple) colours. The same remark is applicable to architectural decoration, where colours are enhanced by opposition to white and black. The Egyptian and Assyrian courts of the Crystal Palace will supply us with examples.

But bright colours, though they may gratify the savage, will not please the educated eye, unless they be combined in harmonious proportions. The skill of the artist—especially the decorative artist, under which term is included the *modiste*—will accordingly be shown in combining the various colours in such proportions and apposition as will produce the most pleasing effect to the eye. Nor will the modifying influences of light and shade, as shown in the rounded forms of the human figure and the relieved surfaces of architecture, escape the attention of the true



artist. It will be seen how the colours are vivified by light and saddened by shade; and how the brilliant colours are intensified by contrast with the more sombre ones.

In process of time artists became aware of the value of the various shades of grey and brown—"the broken colours," as we call them—in producing harmonious effects, and giving value to the purer colours by contrast. These tints are called "broken colours," because they are compounded of two or three others.

The Oriental nations—namely, the Chinese, the Indians, and the Saracens—have always been remarked for their exquisite taste in colours; so much so that Mr. Owen Jones, and other artists who have made colours their study, have analysed with great care the decorative works of these people, and have discovered the principles which govern their various combinations of colour. It has been ascertained that the peculiar effect of Oriental colouring is produced, not by the mixture of one colour with another, but by their harmonious juxtaposition in proper proportion—so that a surface which, when placed near the eye, appears to be covered with a symmetrically-arranged mosaic of the primitive or secondary colours, presents, at a distance, or when modified by light and shade, a kind of neutralised bloom; thus producing, but by a different process, the broken tints employed by the European painter. In the one case, these broken tints are merely an optical effect, varying as they are viewed from different distances; in the other, the painter combines the tints on his palette, or the dyer in his vat, and the positive colours of which they are composed are no longer capable of being distinguished by the eye. In both cases great skill is required to produce harmonious effect.

Although we hear of "an eye for colour" and an "ear for music," as if the power of appreciating harmonious colours and sounds were a peculiar gift from nature, yet we

know that both faculties may be cultivated to a considerable extent. And, considering that every one employs colours, either in dress or household decoration, while only a limited number of persons learn music, and that chiefly as an amusement, it does seem almost indispensable that every one should understand the general principles which regulate the harmonious combination of colours. It is just as reasonable to expect persons who "have not an eye for colour,"—or, speaking more correctly, who do not understand the laws which govern the employment of colours—to use them harmoniously, as it would be for those who have no ear, natural or acquired, for music, to produce harmony by striking at random the notes of a musical instrument. Every colour has a distinct effect upon the eye, as every note has its distinct sound to the ear: but the beauty of both consists in their harmonious combination, and this is always the result of refined taste—sometimes innate—and of cultivation. Discordant colours are as painful to the educated eye as discordant notes to a musical ear.

I wish I could impress this truth upon the reader—that I could induce every one to study the harmony of colour in its application to personal and domestic decoration. It is a study which must interest everybody, and which is not difficult to master. And yet, how few understand it! How few think there is any art at all in the arrangement of colours! To satisfy oneself of these facts, it is only necessary to walk for half-an-hour along some public thoroughfare and observe the glaring contrasts of bright colours by which the dress of many persons is distinguished. Children, especially, seem the sport of caprice in this way. On their little persons frequently meet all the colours of the rainbow, without their harmony. The mantle—the dress—the bonnet, with its trimmings—the stockings; all of divers colours, and no two of them in harmony! Verily, Jacob is not the only parent

whose darlings have coats of many colours! These good people probably think that fine feathers make fine birds.

There is one class of persons, possessed of more money than taste, who estimate colours by their cost only, and will purchase the most expensive merely because they are expensive and fashionable. Of this class was a certain lady, of whom it is reported that, in reply to Sir Joshua Reynolds's inquiry as to what colour the dress of herself and husband, who were then sitting, should be painted, asked which were the most expensive colours? "Carmine and ultramarine," replied the artist. "Then," rejoined the lady, "paint me in ultramarine, and my husband in carmine!"

We hear constantly of fashionable colours, and these fashionable colours are for ever changing; moreover, we hear more of their novelty than of their beauty. All who wish to be fashionable wear these colours *because* they are fashionable, and *because* they are new; but they do not consider whether they are adapted to the complexion and age of the wearer, or whether they are in harmony with the rest of the dress. What should we say to a person who, with the right hand, plays an air in C major, and, with the left, an accompaniment in F minor? The merest novice in music would be conscious of the discord thus produced; yet, as regards colours, the educated eye is constantly shocked by combinations of colour as startling and inharmonious.

As regards dress, inharmonious combinations of colour may arise from two causes; namely, first, from employing at the same time two or more colours which do not harmonise with each other; or, secondly, one colour alone which does not harmonise with the complexion of the individual. The former is most annoying to the spectator, and actually sets one's teeth on edge; the latter is chiefly prejudicial to the personal appearance of the wearer. When we employ colours merely *because* they

are fashionable, and without reference to complexion, age, or their vicinity to other colours, one of these effects is sure to arise. It would require considerably more space than is allotted to this article fully to illustrate the effect of colours in their application to dress only, to say nothing of their employment in the internal decoration of houses. I must, however, endeavour to give the reader some idea of the importance of cultivating "an eye for colours," in their relation to the first of these subjects.

As the object of all decoration in dress is to improve, or set off to the greatest advantage, the personal appearance of the wearer, it follows that the colours employed should be suitable to the complexion; and, as complexions are so various, it is quite impossible that the fashionable colour, though it may suit a few individuals, can be becoming to all. Instead, therefore, of blindly following fashion, as a sheep will follow the leader of the flock, even to destruction, I should like to see every lady select and wear the precise shade of colour which is not only best adapted to her peculiar complexion, but is in perfect harmony with the rest of her habiliments, and in accordance with her years and condition.

I have stated that the Orientals, and other inhabitants of tropical countries, such as the negroes of the West Indies, love to clothe themselves in brilliant and positive colours—reds and yellows, for instance. They are quite right in so doing. These bright colours contrast well with their dusky complexions. With us "pale faces" it is different: we cannot bear positive colours in immediate contact with the skin without injury to the complexion.

Of all colours, perhaps the most trying to the complexion are the different shades of lilac and purple. The fashionable and really beautiful *mauve* and its varieties are, of course, included in this category. In accordance with the well-known law of optics that all colours, simple or compound, have a tendency



to tint surrounding objects with a faint spectrum of their complementary colour, those above-mentioned, which require for their harmony various tints of yellow and green, impart these supplementary colours to the complexion. It is scarcely necessary to observe that, of all complexions, those which turn upon the yellow are the most unpleasant in their effect—and probably for this reason, that in this climate it is always a sign of bad health.

But, it will be asked, is there no means of harmonising colours so beautiful in themselves with the complexion, and so avoiding these ill effects? To a certain extent this may be done; and as follows:—

Should the complexion be dark, the purple tint may be dark also, because, by contrast, it makes the complexion appear fairer; if the skin be pale or fair, the tint should be lighter. In either case the colour should *never* be placed next the skin, but should be parted from it by the hair and by a *ruche of tulle*, which produce the neutralising effect of grey. Should the complexion still appear too yellow, green leaves or green ribbons may be worn as trimmings. This will often neutralise lilac and purple colours, and thus prevent their imparting an unfavourable hue to the skin.

Scarcely less difficult than *mauve* to harmonise with the complexion is the equally beautiful colour called “magenta.” The complementary colour would be yellow-green: “magenta,” therefore, requires very nice treatment to make it becoming. It must be subdued when near the skin, and this is best done by intermixture with black; either by diminishing its brightness by nearly covering it with black lace, or by introducing the colour in very small quantity only. In connection with this colour, I have recently observed some curious effects. First, as to its appearance alone: if in great quantity, the colour, though beautiful in itself, is glaring, and difficult to harmonise with its ac-

companiments. Secondly, as to its combination with black: if the black and magenta-colour be in nearly equal quantities—such, for instance, as in checks of a square inch of each colour—the general effect is dull, and somewhat neutral. If, on the contrary, the checks consist of magenta and white, alternately, a bright effect will be produced. Again, if the ground be black, with very narrow stripes or cross-bars of magenta-colour, a bright, but yet subdued effect, will result. This last effect is produced on the principle that, as light is most brilliant when contrasted with a large portion of darkness—like the stars in a cloudless sky—so a small portion of bright colour is enhanced by contrast with a dark, and especially a black ground.

Yellow, also, is a difficult colour to harmonise with the complexion. A bright yellow, like that of the buttercup, contrasts well with black, and is becoming to brunettes, when not placed next the skin; but pale yellow or greenish yellow suits no one, especially those with pale complexions. Its effect is to diffuse, by contrast, a purple hue over the complexion, and this is certainly no addition to beauty.

Blue is favourable to most complexions; light or sky-blue especially so to fair persons with golden hair; fuller tints to those who are less fair, or in whom years have developed more of the colour of the sere and yellow leaf peculiar to autumn. It often happens, that as persons advance in years, colours which suited them in youth cease to be becoming; pink, for instance, agrees with a youthful complexion and fair skin, but it does not harmonise with the yellow tints of more advanced age; in this case either sky-blue, or pure deep blue, will be substituted with advantage for pink.

These few instances will be sufficient to indicate some of the difficulties attending the right use of colour in dress.

While, however, so much incongruity of colour exists to shock the

cultivated eye. those who have watched for some time the progress of ornamental art in this country must have been gratified to observe the improved taste perceptible in the productions of the loom, as regards doth design and harmony of colour. Every year shows an advance in this respect upon the preceding. This improvement is to be ascribed mainly to the diffusion of the knowledge of the principles of ornamental art, by means of the various schools of practical art established in different parts of the country.

As regards dress, the great feature which distinguishes the present era from the last decennial period, is the prevalence of greys, of various shades and tints, for dresses and mantles. These broken and neutral colours, by their vicinity to the skin, increase the beauty of the flesh tints; while monotony is avoided, and variety, one of the great elements of beauty, is obtained, by the introduction of a little positive colour, either as trimming or on other parts of the dress.

As in a landscape, Nature harmonises everything with greys and browns, setting them off here and there, near the eye, by small portions of pure colour—as in the petals of flowers, the plumage of some birds, and the wings of butterflies and moths—so the broken tints and neutral colours, such as black and white, have an admirable effect in draperies, and help to clear up the complexion.

For this purpose the black jackets, of various forms, which have been so much worn of late, are valuable assistants in producing harmony. It is even possible for persons to wear skirts of colours which are not suitable to the complexion of the wearers, when they are effectually separated from the flesh by the intervention of the neutral-tinted jacket or mantle. The effect is more agreeable when the contrast between the black of the drapery and the colour of the skin is softened by collars and sleeves of white lace or muslin.

For the same reason, white jackets and pelerins, of transparent or semi-transparent materials, are useful in harmonising colours with the complexion. Opaque white, on the contrary, is less becoming.

Although broken colours next the skin—which of itself is a broken colour, as is also the hair—have a good effect, and help to clear up the complexion, pure colours are by no means to be excluded entirely from dress: what I mean to say is only that they should be employed with discretion, and always with a view to set off the wearer to the greatest advantage. They may thus be made to produce the best effect.

I have, however, observed one very unartistic application of colour in dress—I allude to the coloured rosette, sometimes imitated by a thick cluster of artificial flowers of one colour, such as rosebuds, worn on the forehead or on the front of the rim of a hat. Now, artists always look upon a single patch of colour as a spot, or blot, which immediately attracts the eye, to the exclusion of everything else, thereby breaking up the repose of the subject or picture. To produce harmony, they consider that a colour should reappear, or be repeated, in different parts of the picture. This rule is founded on observation. Nature does not produce isolated specimens of the flowers which deck our fields and hedgerows, but scatters them over the soil more or less abundantly, and at greater or less intervals. Primroses and cowslips, buttercups and daisies, daffodils and harebells, come not in dense clusters like the nosegays we hold in our hands, nor singly; but each plant is separated from its kindred by the intervening green turf, and appears more beautiful in its emerald setting, while the frequent recurrence at uncertain intervals of the same colours and forms gives pleasure to the eye; and the irregularity of the intervals between the plants produces variety. Applying these observations to the coloured rosette on the hat or fore-



head, a verdict of "inharmonious" must be returned against it. If the hat *must* have a coloured decoration, the colour should be repeated by binding the rim or crown of the hat with the same colour.

As regards colour, the dress of gentlemen may be dismissed in a few words. Nothing can be in better taste than the various tints of grey now so fashionable. May they long so continue!

I wish I could say as much for some of the new uniforms of our rifle corps. Some of these exhibit flagrant violations of good taste; and as colour forms so important a part of the outward and visible signs of military valour, those who have the control of these things should be made acquainted with the principles of the harmony and contrast of colours.

With a few observations on livery suits I shall close this article. I am not discussing the nature of the feeling which prompts one por-

tion of mankind to compel another to wear the suit of "motley" as a badge of servitude, but only the taste displayed in the combinations of colour selected for this purpose. There are abuses which have to be corrected here as in other departments of ornamental colouring; on these I need not dwell. I must, however, observe that the rules which apply to the dress of ladies and gentlemen do not exactly apply to their livery servants. With regard to the former, the great principle is to set off the individual to the utmost advantage; with regard to the latter, the object is to distinguish by the colours of their dress the servants of one family from those of another. Liveries being designed to gratify the eye of the beholder, and not that of the wearer, the great object is to select such combinations of colour for this purpose as shall not offend against the principles of good taste.

## A WOMAN'S MIRACLE.

## CHAPTER IX.

## GLOOMY, NOT GUILTY.

SIR William Raymond had a grievous part to play among the guests he had invited to his mansion, to celebrate the thirtieth birthday of his son and heir. Had he yielded to his own feelings in the matter of the mental condition of Eustace, he would have allowed the occasion to have passed unobserved, but he dared not sacrifice the traditions of his house, which, from time immemorial, had always marked the heir's birthday by public rejoicing.

Hitherto, and on this very morning, he had done everything that man—that father—could do, to draw from his son the cause of his grief, and his change. Not an hour before he met Mr. Burchell and Mrs. Sargood, he had been with Eustace, entreating him, with tears, to relieve his troubled mind by confession, and make his father the sharer of his misery.

"Once more, Eustace," said Sir William, entering the library where his son was now engaged in writing at the table, "I venture to disturb you."

"I can say nothing against it, sir," replied Eustace, quietly, but mournfully. "I am under your roof, and if it gives you pleasure to disturb me, why, I must submit. But let me hope that this, your second visit this morning, is not upon the subject of the first."

"How selfish you have grown, Eustace!"

"If ever you live to know all, which I pray you may not, you will regret that observation. I am more than ever your son, father; and it is only my exceeding love and regard for you, that seals these lips from a revelation that would appal you."

"Oh, my son! My dear son!" cried Sir William, coming forward to the chair where Eustace sat, and placing his hand on his shoulder; "trust me with what you've done;

it shall be as sacred in my breast as yours."

"You little know what you ask, father," Eustace calmly remonstrated. "In this dreadful matter I can better judge than you, and my judgment is utterly against making you a sharer in the knowledge of a crime which makes me shudder to think of."

"Nothing, my son, can be worse than suspense."

"I feel deeply for you, father, but it would be the greatest cruelty I could commit towards you, to enlighten your ignorance on the overwhelming secret—the dreadful blot on the fame of our house. Your knowledge of it would only deepen my grief—would you wish that?"

"You always answer my appeal to you thus. There should be no secrets between father and son."

"The secret I hold from you is for your advantage—your peace—your happiness," said Eustace, with warmth.

"And yet you torture me by your silence. Since Robert's untimely death—"

"Untimely! ah, you say right, father—it was untimely—he should have died before—"

"Before what?" interrogated Sir William, at the sudden pause his son made in his sentence. "Before what, Eustace?"

The melancholy Eustace resented the close pursuance of his father's curiosity:—"You hunt me to death, sir! My daily care for your peace should meet with more consideration from you." After saying this he arose, with face as pale as death, and paced the apartment, his faithful dog, his companion in his pent-up sorrow, at his heels. "Oh! those noisy bells," he cried; "you might have spared me the affliction of a hubbub so painful."

"Had I done so, Eustace, it would have drawn upon our house remarks that it would have been



impossible for me to explain away. You know it has been our invariable custom to keep the heir's birthday."

"Custom must bend to circumstances. It will bring down more observation, more remarks, to rejoice over the birthday of one who has ceased to rejoice, and who cannot appear amongst the invited guests, to receive the congratulations."

"But I hope, Eustace, that you *will* appear," pleaded his anxious father, who had sat down by the table.

"You may hope what you please, sir," said Eustace, thrusting his hand in the breast of his dark grey coat. "But I am resolutely determined not to leave this room."

"Recall those words, Eustace, I implore you. Consider the position your absence will place me in!"

"You should have well considered that before you made arrangements for this mockery; you knew my feelings regarding them. But the friends you have rashly invited have grown used to my absence. At all events, you must make what excuses you can for me; on three of those occasions you have got through them without me, and you must do the same for the fourth, and, I trust, the last of my birthdays you will be called upon to celebrate. Say I am too ill—too much engaged—or what you will. It is *your* difficulty, and I regret that I cannot help you out of it."

"You *can* help me, Eustace. I must appear before my guests with a sorrowful heart. You surely can forget your trouble for an hour or so. Do—do now—for my sake! come down in the hall, and thank those who have come with all their hearts to wish you 'many happy returns of the day.'"

Eustace gave a sad smile, and said—

"I thank them; but they could not wish me a worse fate. Four years ago, my heart would have leapt with joy for so much goodness—"

"I know it would, Eustace. God bless my soul! you were the liveliest, merriest amongst all, at the birthday meetings of your dear brother Robert," said Sir William, encouraged by his son's reference to the happy past. "And, by God's help, you shall be a blessing amongst us again. Come, then, my son. This is the fourth year of your heirship to the family estates, let it be signalised by a renewal of social intercourse amongst your friends, tenants, and neighbours."

"It almost chokes me to refuse your kindness, father—but *I must*." He spoke this most emphatically. "My heirship to the estates has come hand in hand with an inheritance of serious trouble. Had I not been heir to the one, I should not have inherited the other."

This was a most perplexing statement; and Sir William was puzzled how to understand it. Before he spoke, he turned the dark words over and over in his anxious mind, but he could not unravel their meaning. With a troubled countenance, he implored an explanation from his son.

"Have reason, father——"

"Have mercy, Eustace," retorted Sir William, interrupting his son. "For four long years my life has been a sea of trouble. A curse indeed seems to have settled on our once happy house. At one moment death takes one son from me, and impenetrable gloom deprives me of the solace and companionship of another. Oh! Eustace, spare me further suffering!"

"I have not the power, father; but I have the power of increasing it, and you blame me because I will not. Why should I engulf you in the torrent which seeks to overwhelm me?"

"But you see, Eustace, I know much."

"What do you know?" hastily inquired the son.

"I know that you have some trouble pressing on your soul, and I am unhappy to know the cause and extent of it."

"For what good?"

"I have a right to know, and

your father's wishes should be better respected by you."

"I respect your wishes, but I dispute your right to know more of my affairs than I please to communicate."

Sir William was deeply hurt, and his countenance showed it. The son was quick to perceive the wound his haughty words had given, and to make amends, he said in tones and temper that at once atoned for them—

"Father, rest assured that you have been seeking to know that which it would be a thousand times better for your peace that you should not know. If I did not believe this—were I not as certain of it as my existence—I would tell you without another asking. I know suspense is hard to bear, but to know what I know is harder—it would kill you. And my father's life is more precious to me than my own."

"Then is it your wish that I am to end my days thus?—my imagination to be haunted with crimes that you have committed——"

"Father!" cried Eustace, "I have committed no crimes."

Sir William's surprise was considerable when he heard his son say he had committed *no* crimes. He looked at Eustace with such a penetrating gaze, that had he not been strong in truth, the look must have annihilated him.

"Not committed crimes, Eustace?" interrogated Sir William.

"Nor crime," was the staunch reply.

"Eustace! do not palter with me," cried his father.

"Do my looks show deception?"

"No—no—but—but you say you have committed no crime?"

"Nor have I, father. Look at me! I am as pure from crime as when you first saw me."

Sir William almost leaped round the neck of his son, who stood like a statue in the centre of the library, with one hand bent upon the table.

"Oh, my son, you have relieved me of an insupportable weight. For four years my mind has been on the rack about you. Oh, had I

known this before—had I known you to be free from crime—you said you were, Eustace, did you not?" inquired the father, interrupting himself for a repeated assurance that he had not misunderstood his son.

"I am innocent of crime," was the joyful response, which seemed to create a new life in Sir William's heart.

"Then the birthday-feast shall be a right merry one, I can tell you. Ring on, bells! ring on! Come, Eustace, you have nothing now to be downcast about. You shall—you shall be one of us again."

"Never—never, father!" said Eustace, as gloomy as ever. "I am glad I have removed a load from *your* mind, but I have not diminished mine."

"Are you mad, Eustace? Plague on you, what can you have to grieve about, if you are guiltless?"

"I am guiltless——"

"Aye! that's the point, Eustace," in the exuberance of his joy, cried Sir William. "I've been under the impression that you had committed some—some—murder!"

Eustace at first started, and then pulled himself together like one in pain, and then, chidingly shaking his head, said—

"Oh, father, how dared you think thus of me?"

"Others have thought the same. Eustace, I can tell you," replied Sir William, who, since his son's assurance that he was free from crime, spoke more lightly, and with less constraint.

"Others may speak without reason; but you, who knew the character of your son——"

"Aye, aye, Eustace! that's all well enough," interrupted Sir William, "but your habits have so confoundedly changed. Here have you been since Robert died, moping, pale and melancholy, almost morose, shunning everyone, scarce speaking to me—all this change, from a lively young man who used to shoot and hunt with his father, and busy himself about the estate, is a change so strange that it is impossible it could go



unnoticed, and that people, not knowing the true cause, should fail to put all kinds of constructions on it."

"And the general belief is, that I have committed a murder?"

"No doubt of it," frankly replied Sir William. "So you may judge, my son, what I have been made to suffer."

"Oh, I am sure of that, father, and bitterly I have grieved about you; for I had not the power to make you a partner in the serious knowledge which has so grievously affected me."

"But why, my son? Give me good reason that I should be kept in ignorance of this dreadful something, and I will try and be content."

"My word, father!—my word! You would not have a Raymond break his word?"

"Did I know all the circumstances, I might say—Yes. But to the question, as asked by you, I say—No. Let a man suffer anything rather than break his word."

"I thought you would reply thus. Well, father, I have given my word—my most solemn word—never to reveal the secret cruelly imparted to me, and which I ought never to have known. This revelation of a foul crime has so much oppressed me, that my later existence has been coloured by it, and although innocent of everything but the knowledge of it, I have to bear the odium of a criminal!"

"But after what has passed between us, I shall take care, my boy, that no wrong is done to your name or character."

"Better, father, let the mystery go on as before. I beg of you keep yourself clear from all of it. Let the people say what they will; for if you deny them their opinions they will only think that you know more than you care to tell, and from that they will begin to connect you with my criminal doings; and that would be death to me—aye, one breath of slander on your honoured head would be insufferable."

Eustace was here much over-

come. He fell into his chair, bowed his head upon the table, and shed tears.

His misanthropic-looking dog, the companion of his sorrow and his solitude, seeing his master's emotion, began to whine, and he thrust his head up under the loop of the arm that was bent on the table, in search after his master's face, and nestled his nose in Eustace's flowing beard.

"Come, come, my son!" said Sir William, tapping him affectionately on the shoulder; "you really should not make yourself a martyr to the sins of other people, whoever they may be. This is the mistake you are making throughout—your grief would mislead anybody, and anybody might be excused for—for believing what they liked. I confess it misled me, and made me think that you had committed all kinds of discreditable things. And I must charge you, Eustace, with unnecessary reserve and unkindness in permitting me to remain so long in ignorance that your melancholy had nothing to do with actions of your own."

"No doubt I have laid myself open to this charge. I am acutely sensible that I have, and that I have given you unnecessary pain. I might, and ought, on other occasions, when you had almost charged me with crime, to have assured you of my innocence. Father, forgive me."

"Willingly, Eustace! willingly!" said Sir William, taking his son's hand.

"And now, father, it is time that you go and meet your guests, for I can bear no further conversation upon a subject so fraught with pain to both of us."

"Tell me one thing, Eustace, and I will leave you."

"What is it, sir?"

"Is there anyone else in this oppressive secret?"

"I fear there is one person."

"Besides the person who told you?"

"Yes; and if ever the cause of my sorrow becomes known, through that person it will be revealed."

"And who is this person?"

"I must not tell, sir," said Eustace.

"Do I know him?"

"It is a woman."

"A woman, eh?" ejaculated Sir William. "Not Amy Burchell?"

"Oh no!—oh no!—not she."

"Do I know her?" further interrogated Sir William.

Eustace hesitated—then begged his father be good enough to ask no more.

"Just that one thing, Eustace,—do I know her?"

Eustace still hesitated, but at length replied—

"Yes. But I beseech you, father, for your own peace sake, take no care to find her out."

"Whoever can she be?" muttered Sir William to himself, unheeding the observation of his son, and already taxing his ingenuity to fix upon her. "I seem to know no one but Amy Burchell who has been in any way in intimacy with my family. And you say it is not her?"

"I do. But come, father, I have some writing to do, and you have your guests to attend to."

"And I must again press you to be one of them," said Sir William.

"I regret to oppose your wishes; but if you only knew how painful to me was the sight of anyone, you would be the last to invite me to a feast. There is too much trouble still here," striking the region of his heart, "for me to enter society again."

"It can hardly be called 'society,' Eustace—a few old familiar faces would be glad once more to shake you by the hand. Come, now! do come! It is your duty to use the means to shake off this weight of grief, which really, whatever it might be, has unduly possessed you, and will eventually kill you, or make you mad. I thought you had more strength of mind, Eustace, more philosophy, than to bury yourself in mourning for no good to any one. There is not a book, out of the hundreds which now surround us, but would teach you more wisdom of conduct than you now exhibit."

"I will not discuss it," said Eustace.

"You have no material on your side to support you in a discussion. You must own that you are giving way to weakness."

"Whatever it may be, it is irresistible; and you really must permit me to spend my time in my own way. If ever the day should come—which I trust not—when you will know all, perhaps then you may be better able to feel for me."

"No, Eustace, no," persisted Sir William. "Whatever the cause may be it ought not to affect a well-balanced mind as it has yours."

"Place it to the account of weakness of intellect if it so please you—anything—anything; but I must now be left alone," said Eustace, in tones of irritation.

"Tell me——"

"You said, sir, you would ask nothing more of me," interrupted Eustace.

"I told you yesterday that I had received a letter from our old friend Burchell," said Sir William, altering his tactics.

"Never a friend of mine, sir," retorted Eustace, haughtily.

"He and Amy will be here to-day," continued Sir William.

"That is no satisfaction to me," he rejoined, in the same tones of haughty indifference.

"What, Eustace! Would the presence of Amy Burchell be no satisfaction to you?" said his father, in a significant manner.

"Not now, sir. It would only serve to recall the past, which I have struggled to forget, and have succeeded."

"Poor Amy! surely you would like to see her once more?"

"Yes,—she was a sweet girl; intelligent and amiable, too; and I—I—. But I need not tell you, father, what you know—that I once loved her."

"I know you did," said Sir William; "and will again when you see her."

"What, father!" exclaimed the heir of Greatlands in impassioned tones—"love her who was affianced



to my brother!—love her who refused my devoted worship!—love her who led me on with hope, and left me in despair!—love her who told me my ambition to possess her was secured, and, almost with the same sweet breath, to accept my brother! Oh! thank God—thank God! my love was but a bud, and easily nipped. Had its ardent youth been fostered by time, my death would have followed her betrothal to Robert.”

“What, what! did she deceive you?” bluntly asked Sir William, evincing considerable surprise, for most of what Eustace had now communicated was a new revelation to his father.

“Deceived me! oh, no, she is incapable of deception. I deceived myself.”

“What a strange fellow you have become!” said Sir William, quite puzzled how to understand his son, who seemed to him a bundle of contradictions. “But I see it all now—it is a love-affair, and there will never be any getting to the bottom of it.”

“You are mistaken, sir. True love is not an involved affair—nothing simpler, nothing freer from entanglement. Such was mine for Miss Burchell, and hers for me.”

“Then how came she to engage herself to poor Robert?”

“Ask her father,” was the laconic answer.

“Oh, my friend Burchell would never interfere with his daughter's affections. Why should he?”

“Why? Because Robert was your heir, and his suit was freighted with a substantial estate; while mine was laden only with love—so light and flimsy a cargo that the breath of Burchell wrecked it.”

“I should deeply regret to find your explanation the true one. Indeed, I had no idea there was the least engagement between you and Amy.”

“Well, in *your* sense of an engagement, there was and there was not. But in *our* sense there was—an engagement contracted by our hearts, more than the lips.”

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“Hum! I shall speak to Burchell about this.”

“Father!” exclaimed Eustace, grasping both hands in his, and looking in Sir William's face with a pleading anxiety pictured in his own. “Not one word to Burchell of what I've spoken! ‘you must promise me this! you will, won't you?’”

“What I do, Eustace, shall be done in a manner that could not possibly displease you.”

“But why speak of it at all? For Miss Burchell's sake, if not for mine, I beg you will not. For what purpose?”

“I'll tell you, Eustace, if you will be but calm and dispassionate. Listen! I have been a young man myself, and quite a campaigner in the arts of love, and qualified to instruct others. ‘What God has joined together, let no man put asunder,’—I think those words are to be found in the marriage ceremony. Now I consider a union of hearts to be God's union, and I dispute the right of any man to interpose. If Burchell has done so, he has done wrong to himself—wrong to you, and wrong to his own daughter.”

“He would dispute this with you” said Eustace.

“Perchance he might,” admitted Sir William; “but I should have my way in the end with him.”

“And of what use would it be? Would it be worth the disputation?” reasoned Eustace.

“What! to make you and Amy one in marriage, as you are in heart, not worth a little trouble?”

“More than four years have passed, and it is quite impossible for me now to define the state of Miss Burchell's feelings; but I trust, for her sake, that they have as much altered as my own. She can never be anything more to me than my friend. Miss Burchell made her choice, and my pride barely sustained me under the disappointment. But the good offices of Time have enabled me to forget her.”

“Stuff, stuff, Eustace! I'm sure Amy Burchell has a good deal to do with your melancholy moods, and other people, besides me, think

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the same, and I won't believe a word to the contrary."

"I'm glad of that, for I am tired of the conversation."

"Why, it is the best that I have had with you for many a day; and if I live I will turn it to your profit."

While Sir William talked and walked about the library, Eustace sat at the table, and rested one hand on the head of his tall dog, and leant his brow on the other, while his eyes drooped over one of the open books that lay on the table, the centre of which was adorned with a bronze cast of the infant Hercules strangling the serpents.

"Oh, yes; the conversation has been of a most important character to me," continued Sir William, while Eustace seemed to pay but little attention to what he said; "and I am not without hope but that we shall be able to make the 'crooked things straight.' Amy is a charming girl, you know, Eustace."

"Very, charming," said the son, stoically.

"Aye, she is indeed! And I am sure, when you come to see her again, you'll speak in a humbler key, and sue for favour."

"She stands before me now in all her beauty, and I still say she can never live again in the dead ashes of my heart."

"I'll be bound there is a little combustion amongst your dead ashes, that Amy's sparkling eyes will quicken with the flame of love. You see her only now in your mind's eye—a different thing altogether from the real flesh and blood. One touch of her soft hand would be more thrilling, more delightful, than your mental vision of her. However, she is coming, thank God! and I shall not let her leave again until she has changed you from a miserable hermit to a happy married man."

"And if you succeed you will only have succeeded in marrying her to——"

"My son and heir!" interposed Sir William; "who, I am sure, will make her the best of husbands.

Not another word, Eustace, for I know you will—I know you will," he added in affected cheerfulness, but Sir William was not so cheerful as he seemed to be.

Although he was greatly relieved by the facts that had been elicited from his son in the present conversation, he was still much concerned about the secret that Eustace had upon his mind and that he had undertaken not to disclose.

Sir William was verging on the threescore years and ten, but he was not so old in heart which was one of the finest of human kind. He was of the good old sort of gentlemen that England is so justly celebrated for,—good, kind, affable, and just. He was one who held his riches and station more for the benefit of mankind than for himself. To all—for he knew no social distinctions—he was a companion, a mediator, a friend; and a father to his tenants.

"He is a noble gentleman withall,  
Happy in his endeavours, the general voice  
Sounds him for courtesy, behaviour, language,  
And every fair demeanour an example;  
Titles of honour add not to his worth  
Who is himself an honour to his title."

Outwardly he was a fine, tall, upright, cheerful-looking, country gentleman, "one of the olden time." He was quite wedded to the habits, tastes, and manners of the past, a characteristic which is frequently found in association with those who pass much of their time in the offices of hospitality and among the sports of the field.

As Sir William now stands there, pleading before his strangely altered son, in his dark-green riding-coat, buttoned to the throat with shining flat brass buttons, and breeches and top-boots, his large head thickly covered with white hair, a massive mourning-ring on each little finger "in memoriam" of his son Robert and Lady Raymond,—as he stands there now, resting over the back of a chair, no one who saw him could fail to be impressed with the fact that they stood in the presence of a good and superior man.

One of Sir William's old servants here tapped at the door, and an-



nounced to his master that the horse he had ordered to be prepared for him was already at the door of the mansion.

"Shall I order yours to be saddled, and have a ride with me?"

"Not this morning, sir," said Eustace.

"Come! I'm just going to take a ride over to the villas, to invite a favourite tenant of mine to spend the day with us. You don't know Mrs. Sargood, do you?"

"No," curtly replied Eustace.

"Ah, my son," said Sir William, affecting to be gay, "see what you lose by becoming a hermit. She is the most charming creature that I have seen for a very long time. Such vivacity! such a flow of conversation! such a horsewoman! I'm almost ashamed to confess it at my time of life, but I find myself making all kinds of excuses to get into her society, and never leave it but with regret."

"But she is married?"

"Oh, no; a bewitching widow! with a face like a rose—a voice like music—and eyes as bright as—as—I don't know what to compare them to. Come, take a ride with me, and I will introduce you."

"Certainly not: she is just the woman I would rather avoid."

"You'd be afraid to trust yourself—eh?"

"No danger to my shattered heart from womankind. I have now but one wish left."

"What is it, Eustace?"

"To see you happy and reconciled to my isolation."

"Don't talk of happiness, my son, until all causes of unhappiness are removed."

Eustace heaved a sigh that went to his father's heart. He shook his head while he held his long beard, but he made no reply.

"An hour or two with your friends—a few glasses of wine—a gallop with the hounds—a tête-à-tête with Mrs. Sargood—a game at billiards with Burchell—a reconciliation with Amy—"

"All impossible!" cried Eustace.

"I'll wager my life but it shall all come round!" exclaimed Sir William.

"You are talking in the dark, father."

"Not so much in the dark as I was. I have been much enlightened this morning—and, thank God, much relieved. My son is innocent of crime!"

"How could you believe me capable of dishonour?—trouble of mind may be caused by other misfortunes than crime."

"So it might, my son. Indeed, I never seriously thought,—but, in truth, I knew not what to think, where all was, and is, mystery—mystery. You haven't been gambling, have you, Eustace, and lost more than you were prepared to pay?"

"That would be dishonourable,—would it not?"

"Certainly!"

"Need I repeat, that I have committed no dishonour?"

"None!"

"Then you must be in love! Yes—in love—that's the solution of all your troubles! If it isn't with Amy Burchell, it is with somebody else. Don't deny it! I see it all now! A woman's at the bottom of it! The Raymonds, male and female, were ever susceptible creatures! I'll find it out, my boy! The days of your gloom are numbered!"

"I am glad to hear it, sir; for gloom is but a sorry companion."

"Not half so pleasant as one in silks and satins—is it, Eustace?"

"I've lost all susceptibility for the companionship you point to."

"I wonder you haven't lost your senses, as well as your susceptibility, moping about here for four years, making every one as miserable as yourself."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Eustace, with significance.

"But He has *not* forbidden it, Eustace; nor will He, while you continue to rebel against the mercies He has surrounded you with. God is good, Eustace, and with whatever dispensations He visits us, He expects us to submit with patience and cheerfulness. Think of that, my son, and let me hope that you will come amongst us to-day,

and make your friends rejoice in your thirtieth birthday."

No more passed between them. Sir William took his departure, mounted his horse received his whip from his servant, and rode direct to Mrs. Sargeed's villa.

## CHAPTER X.

### MUCH IN LITTLE.

AFTER Sir William Raymond had mounted his highly valued park-hack, and was just on the point of starting towards the villa of the bewitching widow, Mr. Melville, his steward, came up, and hoped that his long interview with Eustace had resulted in his promise to honour the birthday festivities with his presence.

"I have urged the point as strongly as I could, Melville; but he is still singularly stubborn, and shows the greatest disinclination to meet his friends. But I am happy to say that on the whole I have found him more calm and communicative than for a long time past."

The steward expressed much pleasure to hear this, and indulged the hope that he would yet be himself again.

"I don't despair of it, Melville," said Sir William. "I have been assured of one thing, however, that has given me great relief."

The steward was a respectable-looking person, and almost as tall and portly as Sir William himself, and he had been so long in the service of the Raymond family, that he was treated with the same respect and confidence as any of its members. He was greatly pleased to hear what his master communicated to him, and took the liberty of inquiring from him whether he had learnt the cause of his son's mysterious change.

"That, I regret to say, is concealed as closely as ever. But I have learnt, Melville, that his grief is for the acts of others, and is not caused by any of his own. This I had from his own lips thrice

over, and I am sure you share the joy this statement has given me."

"I do, indeed, Sir William," heartily responded the steward. "For although I confess I was never haunted with the slightest suspicion that Mr. Eustace had in any manner seriously committed himself, I could not fail to perceive that your mind often ran in that direction for a solution of the mystery in which your son had shrouded himself."

"You are quite right, Melville," said Sir William; "but, thank God, those dreadful thoughts are for ever chased away. I feared that he was living a life of remorse for some hidden crime."

"Oh dear, no, sir; Eustace is incapable of dishonour."

"So I find, Melville. And, oh! the relief it has been to me! I shall indeed rejoice with a better heart to-day than for four years past."

"Then your conversation, Sir William has not in any way enlightened you as to the cause?"

"Not one step nearer *that* solution," replied Sir William. "Indeed, Eustace assured me that he had given his word never to reveal it. Hearing that, I questioned him no further. But my hope still is, although unsupported by anything that I have discovered, that Miss Burchell has something to do with my son's unhappiness, and that her arrival will effect a great change. You know, Melville, that love indulges in so many eccentric ways that there is no fathoming it. It is real, yet shadowy. Some people, I do believe, are in love without really knowing it, and they grow miserable and misanthropic about everything because they are blind to the true cause."

"I yet think, Sir William, that my theory of the matter will be found the correct one."

"Your belief is that, like many other students, he has lost himself in his reading?"

"I do, Sir William. When he lost the companionship of his brother, he suddenly shut himself up with his books, and devoted himself to solitude."



"You certainly have some evidence for your belief. But it seems almost vain to canvas the subject. It has long engaged the serious attention of all of us, and all of us seem as far from it as ever. Some construe it one way and some another. After all, it may be made up of many things. The death of his brother—love for Miss Burchell—too deep reading and studying—all these things acting on a melancholy temperament may have conspired together and wrecked his mind."

"It is very likely, Sir William."

"But whatever it may be, Melville, we must do our best to-day to forget it. Our friends are invited, and they must be attended to and welcomed. Should any of them arrive before I return, I commit them to your care. I am just going to ride over to Mrs. Sargood's—"

Melville, the steward, significantly smiled, which interrupted Sir William.

"What *are* you smiling about—eh, Melville?"

"A simple thought of my own, sir," was the laconic reply, while the roguish smile still lingered on his jolly-looking countenance.

"Your meaning, Melville?" interrogated Sir William, who already conjectured what the smile indicated.

"When you mentioned Mrs. Sargood's name, I could not help thinking that you just said 'that some persons are in love without knowing it.'"

"And you think I'm one of those silly persons? and that I'm in love with Mrs. Sargood, and don't know it—eh, Melville?"

"Oh, dear no, Sir William—quite impossible!" said the steward.

"Then I don't know that it *is* impossible," playfully rejoined the owner of Greatlands.

"Oh, no," said the steward, anxious to follow the bent of his master. "That only is impossible which can't be."

"So then it is not impossible for me to be in love with Mrs. Sargood? Just now you said it was, Melville."

"I meant in—that is"—stammered the steward, who hardly knew what course to take, or position to hold in the conversation—"I meant that at your time of life—"

"Tut! tut!" gaily cried Sir William. "My time of life, indeed! As strong, hearty, hale, and as well as I ever was, and quite as susceptible to the charms of a good-looking woman—what d'ye think of that, Melville?"

"Very glad to hear it, Sir William," answered the steward, who was flattered by his master's unbounded confidence.

"I had no idea, though, that my regard for Mrs. Sargood was so obvious to you."

"I have observed nothing more, Sir William, than your usual politeness."

"Then why did you smile, eh?"

Sir William was indeed hotly placing his old steward in a fix, and yet he did it pleasantly.

## THE LAST DAYS OF SHAKESPEARE.

THE world at the time knew not its loss when, on the twenty-third of April, in the year 1616, the gentle spirit of Shakespeare returned to the God who gave it; and everything of him that could fade lay stretched in a chamber of New Place, in his native town of Stratford-on-Avon. Barely half a century had elapsed since he had prattled in his nurse's arms, within a few hundred yards of the spot where his remains were then lying in that first dread change after death, when it is so difficult to realise the fact that what is left in this world is only dust; and that it is to be scattered to the winds until it is joined hereafter to the spiritual body that never dies. Once in existence, we cannot get out of it. It is at once so fearful and so glorious to know this—not so much in relation to ourselves, although we are all more less selfish—but in regard to the names that never die in this world; not only to fancy, but to know absolutely, for certain, that Shakespeare, Milton, and others (for a living word from whom we could almost barter our existence) are undying in another sense; and that we may—for there is nothing in Scripture to gainsay it—meet them some day elsewhere.

The surviving relations of Shakespeare thought of and knew this solemn fact. So religious were they, that they could not but have consoled the dramatist in his last days; and so little prejudiced, that, even at a time when the serious world was one that involved an excess of puritanical thought, especially in regard to the drama, they never dreamed of depreciating the profession to which Shakespeare had belonged, and from which he had retired with a noble competency. He had passed the later years of his life chiefly at Stratford; espousing the cause of the poor, adored in his family, respected by his neighbours. In

January, 1616, he was in perfect health. It is sad, alas! to think that before a quarter of a year had elapsed, while he was yet in the flower of his age, he should have been stricken by fever and so died. Susanna Hall, his favourite daughter, exhibited that still, calm sorrow, which is so often the exponent of the severest grief. His wife, who had, on that morning of the sad twenty-third, smoothed the pillow beneath his head for the last time, felt that her right hand was taken from her. His other relatives bemoaned a parent and a friend. The inhabitants of the town of Stratford had lost a neighbour of consummate tact, kindness, and geniality. In London, the theatrical circles regretted deeply the falling of one of their brightest stars. Even Ben Jonson, crabbed in the general, then felt that he was deprived of a friend whose worth in life he had hardly appreciated; but whose memory he now cherished on this side idolatry as much as any. But did the world then really know that the most stupendous genius of all ages had fallen like one of the slain? It is idle to answer such a question in the affirmative. The world at the time was unconscious of the magnitude of its loss, and when Shakespeare's spirit passed away, there were lamentation and mourning in limited circles; but there was not so much sensation in London as there would have been had one of the nobility, however now unknown to fame, been stricken by the hand of death.

The very fact of the comparative neglect of Shakespeare in his own day imparts an additional interest to everything connected with the memory of his life in the locality where he was best appreciated, his native town of Stratford-on-Avon; whence he was driven in early life to seek his fortune in the metropolis, and to which he returned,



after a brief period of activity, to become one of its leading inhabitants. Whatever may have been his position in society in London, we can at least feel tolerably certain that at Stratford he was universally known, and as widely respected. It is not much that we know of the later years of his life; but that little indicates a great deal that is pleasant and satisfactory. In a long-continued and careful examination of the Town Records, made some years ago, I fortunately discovered a leaf of memoranda made by a member of the Corporation, amongst which was an allusion to the poet, which shows, that in the September previously to his death he was at Stratford, and busying himself with matters relating to the projected enclosure of Welcombe Fields. The memorandum is dated September the 1st, 1615, and is in the following terms:—"Mr. Shakespeare told Mr. J. Greene that he was not able to beare the enclosing of Welcombe." The important position he held in the estimation of his fellow-citizens, and the degree of local influence he must have possessed, are evinced in a remarkable degree by the value evidently attached to his opinions on the subject, which were of sufficient moment, not only to render them worthy of this special memorandum by Greene, but also to produce a letter to him signed by nearly all the members of the Corporation, at a period when it is possible that he might have been inclined to have given a hesitating compliance to the wishes of Combe. This is the latest notice of Shakespeare, written during his life, that is known to exist.

It is proved beyond a doubt, from the same records, that Shakespeare's household was, at all events during the later years of his life, a religious one. As early as the year 1614, as appears from the Chamberlain's accounts, a preacher, one of the religious propagandists of the day, was entertained at New Place—"Item, for one quart of sack, and one quart of claret wine,

given to a preacher at the New Place, twenty pence." Presents of wine in this manner were, in those days, considered highly complimentary. This minister was invited to Stratford, under the sanction of a puritanical Corporation; and it is impossible to imagine that the reception of a reforming minister of religion in a private residence, at a period when party feeling in such matters was indulged in to so great an extent, could have taken place against the consent of the head of the family. When his daughter died, her bereaved husband well remembered, that as Shakespeare himself had realised the fact, in the subjection of genius to faith, so that what of his spirit had descended to her then availed her little. But there is a kindly feeling of reverence to the father in the allusion to this contained in the lines on her tombstone at Stratford-on-Avon:—

"Witty above her sex, but that's not all,  
Wise to salvation was good Mistress Hall;  
Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this  
Wholly of Him with whom she's now in bliss."

Shakespeare, as it has been previously observed, died of a fever—no doubt from one engendered by the low sanitary state of the town, the evils of which were probably aggravated by a flood that had swamped the lowlands near the river, exercising an injurious influence on the health of the inhabitants. The vulgar must, however, assign for an event a reason in consonance with the suggestions of their own imagination; and so, as Drayton, rare Ben, and some others, used occasionally to visit New Place—no doubt enlivening it with flashes of merriment the like of which will never again be heard—it was the report in Stratford, about forty years after the poet's decease, that at one of these merry meetings he had taken more than a drop too much, and that so the fever was contracted. The Rev. John Ward, Vicar of Stratford, in a manuscript memorandum-book written in the year 1662, asserts that "Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had a merry meeting, and, it seems,

drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted." Mr. Ward ought to have known better than to have recorded such a bit of stupidity, without taking proper care to investigate the matter; but of all dangerous and ungenerous persons, some of the worst are those diarists who are indifferent altogether to the liberty taken with personal character, in their anxiety to fill their silly journals with fragments of gossip. Ward was just one of this class; and as Shakespeare was a great man, a morsel of detraction regarding such an one was exactly the thing for a pen that could indite nothing of itself that demanded a reader. He altogether overlooked the conclusion, that, if Shakespeare so contracted a fever, why should Ben and Mike have escaped? for to suppose that they refrained from taking glass for glass would be a libel on their characters. Oh, dear no! We may well believe in the fever; but as for the debauch, we will never entertain an idea that a man of Shakespeare's practical wisdom encountered the evils of intoxication a second time—the first occasion belonging, of course, to the celebrated episode in his life when he slumbered under the crab-tree.

New Place, the house in which Shakespeare lived when at Stratford from the year 1597 until his death in 1616, was one of the best residences in the town—inferior of course, to "the College," then inhabited by the Combes, but on the whole superior to nearly all the other private edifices. It was situated at the corner of Chapel Lane and Chapel Street, and, in the poet's day, it had extensive grounds attached to it, part only of which now belong to the property. The house has been pulled

down for more than a century—a man named Gastrell, annoyed by the curiosity of visitors, having destroyed the residence, and plucked up the celebrated mulberry-tree, thus leaving nothing but the site that can remain as a memorial of the later days of Shakespeare. But the violets are still there, and so is the eglantine; and one can yet wander in the poet's garden, looking towards the Chapel of the Guild, and feel that when gazing on that sacred edifice, in a state fortunately unchanged, our eyes resting solely on Nature and the Chapel, we are indulging in a prospect once familiar to Shakespeare himself. There will be seen one of the few fragments of Stratford such as it was in the days of the great dramatist. On this spot, Shakespeare died. The author of *Hamlet* and of *Macbeth* will live in the hearts of numbers who may never see nor even hear of Stratford-on-Avon. Those, however, who have the opportunity, and who cherish his memory as the giver of the best legacies ever bequeathed by the sons of song, may well enter the garden—may detach their eyes from all of human hand, excepting from the Chapel whence the notes of the Gospel reached the ears of the poet—and pay a tribute of reverence to the memory of one of the great benefactors of the world, whispering—"Here wandered in his pilgrimage a man who has purified the imagination, and sweetened much of the hardness of the path of life in us, in you, in thousands who are dead, in numbers who are living, and whose mission will be carried on for the benefit of myriad yet unborn." Truly, and indeed, it is something to gather the violets of Shakespeare—to partake of the fragrance of his eglantine!



BY ROYAL COMMAND.

METALLIC  
TO THE



PEN MAKER  
QUEEN

## JOSEPH GILLOTT

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